REPRESENTING POWER
IN ANCIENT INNER ASIA

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Representing Power In Ancient Inner Asia:

Legitimacy, Transmission And The Sacred,

edited by Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace,

Roberte Hamayon, and Scott Pearce

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Preface

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Inner Asia, Central Eurasia or Central Asia, the core region of the zone described as the 'heartland' and 'pivot of history' in the early twentieth century, has remarkably long been a stepchild of global historical and cultural studies.[1] Politically, parts of the region for a time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries attracted popular attention in connection with Great Power rivalries, e.g. the Anglo-Russian contest, often termed 'the Great Game,' and most recently Soviet and American involvement in Afghanistan. The break up of the Soviet Union and the emergence or re-emergence of independent Central Asian polities from Mongolia to Turkmenistan has again brought the region as a whole to the fore.

Over the last two or three decades, there has been, comparatively speaking, an explosion of scholarly work in the English-reading world dealing with Inner Asia's history, cultures, socio-political forms of organization and its living as well as extinct languages (Soghdian, Bactrian and Tokharian, to mention only a few of the latter), both on a macro-regional scale[2]

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[1] See Halford J. Mackinder, 'The Geographical Pivot of History,' a paper presented to the Royal Geographic Society in 1904 and published as 'The Geographical Pivot of History,' *The Geographical Journal* 23 (1904), pp. 421-37 and expanded as part of his *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York: Holt, 1919, reprinted in Washington, D.C.: National Defence University Press, 1996). See the introductory comments to the book's 1996 edition for the history of the reception of Mackinder's ideas, in particular its embrace by strategists and practitioners of Realpolitik.

[2] See Denis Sinor (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), which covers the period from Antiquity to ca. 1200, now followed by Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank and Peter B. Golden (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

and in numerous studies of individual peoples, periods, languages and cultures. The American Historical Association (belatedly) accorded 'official' approval to this area of study as a bona fide field by including it for the first time in the third edition of its *Guide to Historical Literature* that appeared in 1995.[3] European scholarship, more closely attuned to developments in the region, had an older tradition of interest in and studies about this complex world of steppe and sown.[4] Thanks to new discoveries (in particular of inscriptions and coins) and increasingly more sophisticated and demanding modes of analysis of already known archaeological, historico-literary and ethnographic sources, many new perspectives and orientations have emerged, as *Representing Power* amply demonstrates. Indigenous sources have become available in exemplary text editions and translations, aiding both specialists and those studying Inner Asia from the perspective of the lands on its periphery. The field, which has a steep initiation fee in terms of languages that a scholar has to acquire, has always welcomed, indeed, encouraged interdisciplinary approaches and scholars often wear different hats, those of the anthropologist, archaeologist, historian and philologist, depending on the data available to them.

Inner Asian political traditions and attendant ideologies, especially those that accented heavenly mandated rulership and appeared to imply programs of world conquest have attracted sporadic attention. A more continuing pattern of engagement with some of these issues of *mentalité* and governance began in

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Press, 2009), which focuses on the period from ca. 1200 to the latter part of the nineteenth century. The third volume will deal with the modern era. See also the *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, published under the auspices of UNESCO (Paris: UNESCO, 1992-2005), under international teams of editors, in six volumes, in seven books.

[3] *The American Historical Association Guide to Historical Literature*, 3rd edition, ed. Mary Beth Norton (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2 vols.

[4] See Denis Sinor, *Introduction à l'étude de l'Eurasie Centrale* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963).

connection with a series of Soviet-American academic symposia that were held in conjunction with a traveling museum exhibition in 1989 in the United States (Los Angeles, Denver and Washington, D.C.): *Nomads: Masters of the Eurasian Steppe*. It resulted in a three-volume series dealing with the Inner Asian nomads, one of which, *Rulers from the Steppe. State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*,[5] was devoted to many of the themes further explored in the two volumes of *Representing Power*. The Permanent International Altaistic Conference also took 'Sovereignty' as the main theme of its annual meeting held in July, 1991, in Berlin, the papers from which were published in 1993.[6] More recently, the Kazakh historian, Tursun I. Sultanov, has essayed an analysis of the Chinggisid legacy in the Kazakh khanate,[7] one among a number of modern Inner Asian historians re-examining and re-interpreting their past and earlier political cultures in a new post-Soviet space, one also not completely free of official ideological currents.[8]

The present two-volume collection also stems from a conference, held in Paris in 2006, that brought together an

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[5] See Gary Seaman (ed.), *Ecology and Empire. Nomads in the Cultural Revolution of the Old World*, Ethnographics Monographs Series, 1 (Los Angeles: Center for Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California, 1989); Gary Seaman and Daniel Marks, *Rulers from the Steppe. State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, Ethnographics Monographs Series, 2 (Los Angeles: Center for Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California, 1991); Gary Seaman (ed.), *Foundations of Empire. Archaeology and Art of the Eurasian Steppes*, Ethnographics Monographs Series, 3 (Los Angeles: Center for Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California, 1992).

[6] Barbara Kellner-Heinkele (ed.), *Altaica Berolinensia. The Concept of Sovereignty in the Altaic World* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993).

[7] T. I. Sultanov, *Podniatye na beloi koshme. Potomki Chingiz-khana* (Almaty: Daik Press, 2001)

[8] On these lively debates in Kazakhstan, see N. E. Masanov, Zh. B. Abykhozhin, I. V. Erofeeva, *Nauchnoe znanie i mifotvorchestvo v sovremennoi istoriografii Kazakhstana* (Almaty: Daik Press, 2007); B.B. Irmukhanov, *K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii kazakhskogo naroda* (Almaty: Ghalym, 2008).

international team of scholars to focus on the issues of 'Representing Power' in the Inner Asian world. In that same year the International Congress of Byzantine Studies held a conference in London on 'Theories of Empire,' which devoted considerable attention to the same issues. Clearly, power and its forms of representation, always areas of concern for historians and social scientists, were on a number of scholarly agendas. The Paris conference was preceded by several volumes (one of which derived from a conference held in Cambridge, in 2004), which examined 'Imperial Statecraft' in Inner Asia.[9]

The Inner Asian nomads organized themselves in stateless confederations, variants of 'early states' and more rarely in expansive imperial enterprises, responding to internal 'crises,' as some argue, or as others suggest, to external stimuli coming from sedentary imperial neighbors with whom their pastoral nomadic economy obliged them to interact. The Steppe Imperial Tradition associated with these nomadic polities dates back to the Xiongnu, a people of still unknown ethno-linguistic affiliations centered in Mongolia, who were rivals of the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). They brought under their rule, for a time, many of the neighboring Turkic, Mongolic and Iranian peoples. Their supreme ruler bore the title of Chanyu, a term of obscure origin and still not identified with certainty with any of the later titles used in Inner Asian polities.[10] By the latter part of

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[9] David Sneath (ed.), *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, Studies on East Asia, 26 (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University for Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2006). See also David Sneath (ed.), *States of Mind: Power, Place and the Subject in Inner Asia*, Studies on East Asia, 27 (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, for Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2006).

[10] *Chanyu* 單 于 was previously usually rendered as *Shanyu*. It has been reconstructed as Later Han dźan wɑ by A. Schuessler, *Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), pp. 255(#24-21), 56 (#1-23); or as EMC (Early Middle Chinese) *dʑian wuaʼ, by E. Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation in Early Middle Chinese, Later Middle Chinese, and*

the third century, more than a century after the Xianbei had replaced the Xiongnu as the politically dominant element in Mongolia, the title *Qaghan*, the equivalent of 'emperor' in the steppe world, is first attested and thereafter, in a variety of forms – *Qa'an*, *Qan/Khan*,[11] remained the term associated with supreme rulership. It, too, has no convincing etymology and although universally used by the Inner Asian 'Altaic-speaking peoples,' may well be of non-Altaic origin. Indeed, the Altaic-linguistic theory itself has been seriously questioned,[12] only one of many contested fundamental issues in the rapidly maturing

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Early Mandarin (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991), pp. 48, 381. EMC corresponds to the period before the seventh century. Attempts have been made to read into this and other reconstructions various titles (*jabghu/yabghu*, *tarkhan*) associated with later Inner Asian polities; see V. S. Taskin, *Materialy po istorii drevnikh kochevykh narodov gruppy dunkhu* (Moskva: Nauka, 1984), pp. 305-6.

[11] *Qan* also appears in Old Turkic, sometimes interchangeably with *Qaghan* and on other occasions denoting 'a subordinate ruler.' See Sir Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 630.

[12] C. Beckwith, *Koguryo. The Language of Japan's Continental Relatives* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 184-95. See also A. Vovin, 'The End of the Altaic Controversy,' *Central Asiatic Journal*, 49/1 (2005), pp. 71-132; and the review by B. Kempf in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 61/3 (2008), pp. 403-8, of S. Starostin et al., *Etymological Dictionary of the Altaic Languages* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), which presents the most recent argument in favor of the Altaic theory (I, pp. 11-236), concluding that Proto-Altaic divided into 'Turco-Mongolian, Tungus-Manchu and Korean-Japanese around the 6th millennium B.C.' 'Turko-Mongolian,' in turn, divided ca. the 4th millennium. The question of the relationship of Japanese to Altaic is taken up by M. I. Robbeets, *Is Japanese Related to Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic?* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005). Her work has been sharply criticized by R. A. Miller in *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* N.F. 21 (2007), pp. 274-9. In an earlier work, *Japanese and the Other Altaic Languages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), Miller favored such a relationship. J. Patrie, *The Genetic Relationship of the Ainu Language* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1982), would add Ainu to the Altaic 'family.'

field of Inner Asian Studies. The overwhelming majority of the titles and terms for governance that are known to us from the Pre-Chinggisid era appear to be of non-Turko-Mongolian origin, some pointing to the Iranian and Indic (via Iranian or Tokharian) cultural worlds, others to China and yet others to sources unknown or as yet unidentified. Many of these titles and terms, like their counterparts in the 'Roman' institutional world, with which we may compare the Steppe Imperial Tradition, underwent changes over time, some subtle, others considerable. Thus, Turkic *törü*, 'traditional, customary, unwritten law,'[13] the establishment of which closely accompanied the creation of the *el/il*, 'imperium, state,' in its earliest Türk attestations, still retains this legal sense in Medieval Qïpchaq *töre, düre*[14] and Modern Turkish, *töre, törü*, but underwent a series of semantic shifts in later Tatar *türä*, 'chief, head, superior, official,' and in the Kyrgyz *törö*, which means 'lord' in epic and folkloric usage and in contemporary times 'bureaucrat.' In Kazakh, *töre* is associated with those of Chinggisid descent, the khans and their families, a meaning already noted in Chaghatay, and accorded to the sons of the rulers of Bukhara, as well as to descendants of the Prophet Muhammad,[15] while a Kazakh *töreshi*, harkening back to the earlier meaning of the word, is a 'judge.' *Tegin*, a title of some antiquity attested in the pre-Türk era (before 552 CE) and

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[13] See Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, pp. 531-2, for *töre* in later forms. And see Rodica Pop's article in Volume II of *Representing Power*.

[14] Recep Toparlı, et al., *Kıpçak Türkçesi Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2003), pp. 67, 282, where it also acquired the meaning of 'religion.'

[15] Bruce G. Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan. Kazak Religion and Collective Memory* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 35. See also V. V. Radlov (Radloff), *Opyt slovaria tiurkskikh narecheii/Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte* (St. Peterburg: IAN, 1893-1911, reprint Moskva:1963), III/1, cc.1250-1251, 1254-1255; L. Z. Budagov, *Sravnitel'nyi slovar' turetsko-tatarskikh narechii* (St. Peterburg: IAN, 1869-1871), pp. 390-1; Yaşar Çağbayır, *Orhun Yazıtlarından Günümüze Türkiye Türkçesinin Söz Varlığı. Otüken Türkçe Sözlük* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2007), 5, pp. 4890, 4892.

denoting a son or grandson of the Qaghan in the Türk era (ending in the early 740s), had developed two meanings by the time of Mahmûd al-Kâshgharî (writing ca. 1077). It signified a 'slave,' which Kâshgharî considered its 'root meaning' and frequently appeared in slave names, such as Kümüsh Tegin 'a slave clear-colored as silver.'[16] In this regard, it was like the title *chor*, usually associated with members of the royal house, members of the personal retinue of the Qaghan, or leaders (often members of the ruling clan) of subordinate confederations in Türk times, which by the ninth century, in the 'Abbâsid Caliphate, was frequently attached to the names of *ghulâms* (military slaves). Kâsgharî was at some pains to explain the fact that *tegin* was still used to denote the sons of the 'Khâqâniya' – the royal house of the Qarakhanid realm – whence he himself derived, while at the same time often figuring in slave anthroponymy. He says that the term was transferred from the slaves to the 'sons of Afrâsiyâb' (the Qarakhanids identified themselves with the Old Iranian tradition of Tûrân), 'because the latter used to pay their respects to their fathers by addressing them in the following way, both orally and in letters: "Your slave did such-and-such and performed such-and-such." When used alone, *tegin* meant son of the Qaghan, but when employed in a name it invariably meant "slave".'[17] Time and the impact of Perso-Islamic influences were modifying and producing new explanations of earlier traditions.

The Türks and the Uighurs (744-840), their successors in eastern Inner Asia, erected large burial complexes for some of their rulers and high ranking statesmen, replete with inscriptions (in Turkic employing a runic writing system and other languages) and images of the deceased, vivid and effective physical representations of political authority and grandeur. The meaning of the symbols in these royal burial complexes, the genre of the inscriptions (history, historical tale, epic,

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[16] Mahmûd al-Kâšyarî, *Compendium of the Turkic Dialects (Dîwân Luγât at-Turk)*, ed. and trans. Robert Dankoff in collaboration with James Kelley in *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures*, 7, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982-1985), I, p. 314.
[17] Kâšyarî/Dankoff, I, pp. 276, 314.

folklore?[18]), and the significance of cultic objects (e.g. *balbals*) found around them are all now the subject of a lively discussion, carried on in the *Representing Power* volumes.

The Mongol Empire and its successor states have, understandably, drawn the most attention. This was not only the largest contiguous land empire in history, it is also the pre-modern Inner Asian society about which we are best (but far from fully) informed. The Mongols were not unaware of the imperial traditions of their predecessors. Whether this was transmitted through historical tales, epics, or from Uighur bookmen in Mongol service is unclear. Nonetheless, it is hardly accidental that Qara Qorum, the early Chinggisid capital, was established in the same territory as earlier Türk and Uighur centers, lands they considered holy. The *Tengri*-mandated imperial ideology is another continuing theme. In many respects, the Chinggisid Empire can be viewed as the fullest expression of the Steppe Imperial Tradition dating back to the Xiongnu and the Türks.

The essays in these volumes represent a new level of engagement with this complex tradition, a tradition that lived on over the centuries, often in forms quite different than when we first encounter them.

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[18] D. V. Rukhliadev, 'Problema zhanra v izuchenii drevnetiurkskikh runicheskikh pamiatnikov.' *Tiurkologicheskii Sbornik 2003-2004* (Moskva: Vostochnaia Literatura RAN, 2005), pp. 203-53; and his 'Drevnetiurkskie runicheskie pamiatniki i zhanr istoricheskogo skazaniia,' *Altaica* XI (2006), pp. 85-97; as well as S. G. Kliashtornyi, 'Drevnetiurkskie runicheskie pamiatniki i ikh avtory,' *Altaica* XIII (2008), pp. 73-80.

Representing Power In Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission And The Sacred

Introduction

Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte Hamayon

Foreword

The papers collected in the present works are the fruit of a collective reflection on conceptions, institutions and techniques of power in the Inner Asian world. They were presented at the international symposium 'Representing Power in East Asia: Legitimizing, Consecrating, Contesting,' held in Paris in March 2006.[1] The symposium was organized in the framework of an agreement between the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Centre d'études mongoles et sibériennes) and the University of Cambridge (Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit). It came as a continuation of a symposium on 'Inner Asian Statecraft and Technologies of Governance' held in Cambridge in March 2004, which gave rise to the publication in 2006 of two volumes edited by David Sneath in the collection of the Center for East Asian Studies at Western Washington University (Studies on East Asia, Vols. 26 and 27).

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[1] This symposium was held in Paris in March 23-25, 2006. It was organized by the Centre d'Études Mongoles et Sibériennes of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) and received support from the EPHE (Paris), the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit (MIASU, Cambridge, UK), the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Paris), the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris), the Groupe Sociétés Religions Laïcité (CNRS-EPHE, Paris) and the French Ministry of Research.

Key Issues

The present volumes are mainly concerned with the types and techniques of power representation in Inner Asian societies, in other words, the various ways power is 'represented' in these societies, whether nomadic or sedentary, state-controlled or not, centralized or headless. We wanted to avoid framing the contributions to these volumes from the outset in too narrow a definition of 'representation.' Our call for papers thus used a very simple and broad definition of the notion, and each contribution addresses the topic from a different perspective, some considering material representations such as seals, others imaginary figures of power and social institutions.

The representation of power and its intrinsic duality

As a point of departure, we propose to understand 're-presented' in a very literal sense, as 'made present again,' i.e. made perceptible as such. Ernst Kantorowicz (1957) and Ralph E. Giesey (1960), in their celebrated studies of French and English medieval monarchies, have shown the pivotal importance of representation in the exercise of power, and thus in the study of power's manifestations to understand how it operates. These authors describe how from the fourteenth century onwards, when an English king died, he was to be 're-presented,' i.e. 'made present again' until a new king was crowned so that the royal power would not be vacant. The *King*, indeed, wouldn't die with the *king*: the *dignitas* of his position was supposed to live on in what contemporary lawyers called his 'mystical body' which, contrary to his 'natural body,' was imperishable. To ensure the continuity of power despite the discontinuity of rulers, lawyers actually invented the fiction of the king's 'two bodies,' the expression which gave its title to Kantorowicz' book. All through his life, the king's natural body conveniently 'embodied' his mystical body, but when the first was to be buried, the second then needed to be represented as an enduring entity. Hence the intrinsic duality of power representation, which will be further explored below.

This need for power to be represented – made not only 'present' but properly conspicuous – did not, however, begin in medieval Europe, nor was it ever confined to the moment of the

ruler's death. In their recent study of the uses of the monarch's image in the ancient Near East, Greece and Rome, Richard Fowler and Olivier Hekster (2005: 9) have put this in a nutshell: 'Visibility lies at the heart of power: the ability to create and manipulate images is itself an indication of power and (arguably) a means to accumulate greater power.'

Representations of the living ruler have obviously been crucial at various moments of Western history, and particularly in the Roman world. The emperor's face, of course, was represented on the currency, as well as on the war banner, and his name was engraved on the soldiers' shields – where such a representation could be held to have a direct function of protection. The worship of the Roman emperor's portrait became compulsory under Caligula, and at that time the ruler's image not only had a religious function, but also a juridical one: it could indeed 'take the place' of the emperor himself, and become a juridical substitute. When a city submitted to the empire for instance, the gates' keys could be handed over to the victorious army in the presence of the emperor's image if the emperor himself was not there.[2]

The living ruler's portrait is but one among many possible ways for power to be represented – the reason why this volume, 'Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia,' and its companion, 'Representing Power in Modern Inner Asia,' do not confine their scope to it. Although one of the chapters is dedicated to Mongol emperors' portraits, the aim of these books is to explore the techniques of power representation in Inner Asia, whatever form they may have taken: references to dead rulers, external symbols, words, attitudes... The core idea

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[2] See Sendler (1981: 16). See also Schneider (2002: 26) about early 18th century court ceremonial: 'En ce qui concerne le portrait d'un souverain, il se trouve dans les salles d'audience, près des ambassadeurs, entre le baldaquin et le siège de parade, généralement sous forme de portrait en buste. Il représente la personne, tout comme si elle était présente, c'est pourquoi il n'est pas facile de lui tourner le dos étant assis, et personne, sauf les ambassadeurs, ne peut paraître la tête couverte dans la pièce où se trouve le portrait d'un potentat régnant' (1733).

underlying this research, beyond all possible types of distinctions, is that *no power can do without some kind of representation*. This does not mean that power cannot at times operate invisibly, or in a state of secrecy (to the contrary, secrecy is often a good trump for working efficiently). But even then, it cannot do so without offering some representation behind which to conceal some of its operations, or temporary weakness or deficiency.

The power of representation

Representations can be intended to make up for the effective absence of actual power-holders. But they may also be aimed at conveying a certain image of their power, which varies with the context, with the addressee, or with the planned operation. Keeping subjects obedient may involve a shaping of the image they have of both power and power-holders, unless the latter choose to resort only to coercion. Therefore, power structures use material representations to express or confirm their legitimacy and to impose their authority, as well as to make their governance effective. Conversely, representations of power-holders may be manipulated by their opponents, a possibility that may have appeared to some historic rulers as sufficient reason to refrain from being represented. There are also moments when the represented collapses into the representer, a question to which we return at the end of this introduction. Thus, while destroying a ruler's portrait may affect his *dignitas* without actually killing him, it may lead him to die if he himself and/or people around him believe it should.[3]

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[3] In Chapter 6 of this volume, Isabelle Charleux reports the widespread belief among Mongol peoples that drawing a portrait or taking a photo of a person could have a direct effect on that individual. The belief that a person's effigy imparts the power to act on his/her very body is almost an universal one, documented by anthropologists working in many different societies following James George Frazer's early and controversial account of 'homeopathetic' magical practices. Finally, in his celebrated paper on 'the idea of death suggested by the collectivity,' Marcel Mauss was the first to point out the fact that a person who was supposed to die, after the breaking of a taboo for instance, *would* actually die in most cases (Mauss 1968 [1926]).

On the other hand, representations produced or used by dissident subjects or hostile forces are intended as arms of blame or statements of transgression, as challenge or contest, and they may ultimately alter a given power's legitimacy or effectiveness. This could be why one of the first measures taken by dictators is usually directed against humorists. On the whole, the efficacy assigned to the very act of harming a ruler's portrait, distorting his image (for instance, through caricatures),[4] burning a flag or vandalising a monument is the best acknowledgement that representations have the power to manifest the existence of the represented.

A plurality of techniques of representation

Representations may be material or immaterial, exterior to the ruler or constituent of his/her person ('force,' 'fortune'...). There may also be significant differences in the sources and groundings of representations, reflecting different logics, particularly continuity or rupture. Representations may be claimed as continuing a tradition associated with past rulers, rooting legitimacy in the ancient, so as to make it more familiar to people and affirm it as well established (see Chapter 5 in this volume on the transmission of the seal by Françoise Aubin). Conversely, representations may be marked with innovation – through creation anew or borrowing – in order to make it obvious that the power represented is a new, regenerated one: for instance, by changing the location of the capital city or the national emblem, as shown by Sedenjav Dulam and Isabelle Bianquis in their discussion of the Mongol *sülde* in Chapter 1 of Volume 2. A change of power may entail a change of currency, of seal, of the style of ornaments, not to mention the multiplication of alphabets – Uyghur, *'phags pa, soyombo, cyrillic* – in Mongolian history. The emergence of a new power may imply not only the creation of new symbols but also the destruction of representations of the former power. Thus, in China, it was usual that a new dynasty destroyed the imperial palaces of former dynasties. Similarly, the Chinggisids plundered the tombs of past rulers so that their clan line could

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[4] See Boespflug 2006.

not be protected anymore; and the socialist power in Mongolia destroyed many monasteries, especially those of Ih Hüree. More recently, some modern states formerly included in the USSR destroyed the statues of Communist heroes.

In addition to this, a single power-holding authority may produce different representations, destined for different peoples. Hence the Qing dynasty steles in different languages, with a slightly different meaning in each version according to the language. It has been argued (Farquhar 1978; Crossley 1999; and others) that the Manchu emperors changed their narratives and their image when addressing different constituents of their empire: they figured as literati for the Confucian Chinese, as a Bodhisattva for the Tibetans and Mongols, as heir of Chinggis Khan, called the Holy emperor (Boyda Ejen), for the Mongols, as warriors and hunters for the Manchus... Similarly, the Manchu emperors – especially Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong – had many disguises to fit the multiple facets of their power.

We thus believe that the techniques of power representation addressed by the contributions to these two volumes give an unprecedented insight into Inner Asian conceptions of power. Whether material (as monuments or seals), or immaterial (as titles or codes of behavior), these representations are the focus of a series of investigations which address the topic from different points of view – production, types, functions, symbolical background, etc., all of which intersect with and overlay each other. In all these respects – types of representations and ways of crafting or using them – these volumes raise the question of an Inner Asian specificity, a question which remains to be answered at the outcome of this project.

The contributions to these two volumes cover not only a large area around Inner Asia, from Syria to Manchuria, but also a huge time-span, going back to the Xiongnu and addressing most historical periods since then until today. There was no fully satisfying solution to the question of how to organize these chapters in two separate books, a physical necessity imposed by their number. Thus, we have chosen the one that would provide two reasonably balanced, and possibly independent, volumes. Volume 1, the book you now hold in your hand, assembles the

contributions that concern what we will call 'ancient Inner Asia,' i.e. from the second century BC to the seventeenth century AD. Volume 2 is comprised of those which relate to 'modern Inner Asia,' that is from the eighteenth century onwards – even though some of them make occasional reference to earlier periods. We also chose to give what is essentially a single introduction for both volumes, so as to emphasize the common questioning that underlies them and the unity of the initial project.

Material and non-personal symbols of power

Several chapters in both volumes show that, throughout their ancient and modern history, Inner Asian societies have produced highly varied types of material signs and regalia. These can be immobile, as are palaces or stone inscriptions, or mobile, like emblems, types of scripts, seals, tablets of authority (*paizi*), or banners. Those listed above would be impersonal symbols, in contrast to a ruler's portraits or statues, which are personal representations.

Seals have been used as important bases for legitimacy within both nomadic and sedentary societies, and the long history of their appropriations, re-appropriations, confiscations and recoveries has been a crucial factor in many conflicts. Françoise Aubin highlights in Chapter 5 (Volume 1) how the Chinese seal and the Mongol *tamga* (livestock brand) were combined in the later Mongol seals. Arguing that the very crafting of the seal was linked to the building of a certain notion of power, she goes on convincingly to show how possession of a seal legitimized the authority of its holder, and how subsequent transfer of a seal involved transmission of the associated power. Losing the seal, conversely, like losing some other symbol of power such as the dynastic treasures for dynasties that ruled over China,[5] could mean losing altogether the legitimacy for

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[5] *Guobao*, 'national treasure,' designated particularly wise people in ancient China, and 'precious items preserved by the sovereign as a symbol of the good fortune of the country' in classical China. Holding such national treasures equated to being in possession of Virtue; speaking of the ruling dynasty, they signified 'holding the celestial Mandate.' See Anna Seidel 1981.

governing.[6] The seal of the Mongol banner princes (*jasaγ*) of the Qing dynasty was their most precious treasure; it followed the prince when he went to the league meetings.

Inner Asian history provides various examples showing that such material representations of power could be transmitted or appropriated in order to give a new power legitimacy over the subjects of the old. Part of the reason why the Manchus could ultimately convince the Inner Mongol groups to rally to them in 1636 was that they held two major symbols of Mongol power: the seal of Qubilai Qan – allegedly the seal of Chinese emperors since the Han dynasty – and the statue of Mahakala made at the instruction of 'Phags pa Lama for Qubilai. As a representation of power, Mahakala's statue is itself quite illustrative of the power of representations, to take up a pun made by Louis Marin (2005 [1980]): this statue was indeed said to have helped the Yuan to defeat the Song armies. In 1635, a Sakyapa lama who had deserted the court of Ligdan Qan brought it to the Manchu ruler Hung Taiji in Mukden. The Manchus built a temple to house it, first in Mukden and then in Beijing, and Mahakala Gur mgon po, formerly a protector of the Yuan dynasty, thus became one of the main protector deities of the Qing dynasty. These dynastic treasures followed their owners in their peregrinations: for instance, the move of the Mahakala to Beijing came when the Qing dynasty founded the new capital. Similarly, the treasures of the ancient dynasties were necessary for Chang Kai-shek to perpetuate the Republic of China in Taiwan: he therefore took away the most precious and most transportable part of the Forbidden City's imperial collections when he left the continent in 1948 (Elliott and Shambaugh 2005).

Unlike the Chinese dynastic treasures, material representations of power in nomadic societies typically embodied the

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[6] Thus Qin Shihuang, the first Chinese emperor, is said to have lost his legitimacy when he proved incapable of hoisting an ancient bronze from the bottom of a river. Some statues presumed to be very old could also legitimize the dynasty that could take hold of them: the famous Udyana statue, for instance, called 'the Sandalwood Buddha,' was supposedly transmitted since the Han from one to another of the dynasties ruling over China. (It was, in reality, re-carved several times.)

soul of one or more ancestors. The black and white standards of Chinggis Khan are today among the most sacred objects of the Mongolian state, embodying the nation built in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They do this despite the fact that they are not the original standards, but new ones carefully made according to the ancient rules. Not considered fakes, they are instead valued as the original ones would have been, and even more, since they are not damaged as the originals would be if they still existed. In Chapter 1 (Volume 2), Sedenjav Dulam argues that the worship of the standards is a major part of the newly invented state cult in 1990.

Furthermore, material goods that would have been included among the dynastic treasures of China's emperors, such as precious silk cloth, were not kept by the Inner Asian ruler but would on the contrary be redistributed among his subjects and vassals (Allsen 1997 for the period of the Mongol empire). Such redistribution takes as a model the sharing of game in hunting lifestyle as argued by Sergei V. Dmitriev in Chapter 8 (Volume 1), on the basis of the analysis of the term *sülde*. Nikolay N. Kradin also shows in Chapter 9 (Volume 1) the importance of the redistribution of Chinese gifts and war booty among imperial relatives and tribal chieftains of the Xiongnu (second century BC to second century AD), and the lack of understanding of the Chinese on how these goods were actually used to support the stability of political power in the steppe. '[T]he gifts flowing through their hands not only did not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthened the ruler's power and influence in the imperial confederation' (Barfield 1992 [1989]: 36-60; quoted by Kradin in Chapter 9).

Redistribution as opposed to accumulation of wealth has often been regarded as an important attribute of power and element of authority within the nomadic world. However, it would be too simple to oppose nomads exchanging mobile goods to sedentary states accumulating treasures in the palace. Although architecture and monumental statuary have often been seen as characteristic of sedentary states, they were obviously not unknown to the world of the steppes. Archaeological

excavations show that nomadic states such as the Xiongnu could have fortresses and monumental tombs.[7]

The Buddhist clergy has also produced more than a few pieces of sedentary architecture in southern Mongolia, from the late sixteenth century on. In many places, while nineteenth-century encampments of princes in both southern and northern Mongolia were small and itinerant, large sedentary monastic towns and stupas figured as the only human fixed settlements on the map, reflecting religious authority's domination of the secular banner nobility. It is quite clear that the Buddhist clergy used monumental architecture as a tool to impose their authority on Mongol territory, visibly and durably marking the land with permanent buildings. And contrasting entirely with attitudes towards architecture held by clergy and nobility, Mongol herders avoided, and continue to avoid, as far as possible, leaving marks on the land, by burying their dead in unmarked graves and by living in mobile tents.

Similarly, to resume here a comparison made by Chayet and Jest (2001) about Amarbayasgalan monastery in Mongolia, the large imperial monasteries built by the Qing dynasty acted as a Manchu seal affixed to the Mongolian landscape. Architecture was in that case a conspicuous mark of Manchu power upon Mongol land. Other marks as well were placed upon nomadic territories to manifest the state's power: cairns (*ovoo*) used as boundary markers, stone inscriptions, walls, garrisons, triumphal arches, custom posts, roads, postal houses, etc.[8]

Monumental statuary and architecture may, of course, be politically significant in the contemporary Inner Asian world too, as shown by several contributions to the second volume. Ai

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[7] Let us mention, for instance, the current discoveries by the French archaeological mission at Golmod in Mongolia (André 2002); one may also take into consideration the inscriptions of Kül Tegin and other Orhon Turks.

[8] In the other kinds of representation, we could for example include the calendar, the currency, as well as the maps of every Mongolian banner territory that Qing demanded from local administrations. As a matter of fact, possessing the maps of a given land, a practice widespread within literate cultures, may guarantee certain rights over it. It is particularly so when a sedentary empire delimits a nomadic people's territory.

Maekawa recounts in Chapter 10 (Volume 2) how the monumental Soviet architecture of the 1930s turned Ulaanbaatar into a modern capital city, symbolizing the new power of the communist state. Arguing that architecture was designed to be 'socialism in material form,' she questions whether it met its original ideological aim. On the basis of interviews held with old people originally from the countryside who have memories of their first experience of the city, Ai Maekawa shows that while some people's perception of the city met the initial intention of the government, that of others was completely at odds with it. She argues that this complexity generates the dynamic urbanization of contemporary Mongolia.

In a similar perspective, Morten Pedersen highlights in Chapter 8 (Volume 2) how a famous monastery of northern Mongolia destroyed during the violent religious repression of 1937 and 1938 continues to exist as a 'Virtual Temple' in people's minds. Analyzing the peculiar fate of a Green Tara statue, he stresses the paradox that whereas attempts to re-institutionalize Buddhism have failed, Buddhist artifacts remain today primary objects of worship for many Darhad Mongols. Pedersen's point is an important one, for he manages to show how an artifact might keep an agency of its own (in the sense of Alfred Gell 1998), while no longer representing what it was originally crafted to represent. A striking illustration of this is his reports of people's descriptions of the Temple of Shambala, which has come to also be known as the Temple of America and 'remembered' as depicting the American and Western Way of life in the most colorful way. What made the statue stand for the temple instead of just being used as a cultic object?

Personal representations of living, dead or imaginary figures
At the core of reflection on the representation of power is the question of the living ruler's portrait, mentioned at the very beginning of this introduction. Quite noticeably, the Chinese dynasties almost never used pictorial representations of their emperors to represent the empire. And portraits of past emperors were first and foremost objects of worship, following the custom of having portraits of dead ancestors intended only for members of the family and close friends (Stuart and Rawski 2001;

Pirazzoli 2005). It is only under the Manchu emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng and above all Qianlong that imperial portraits of living rulers – made verisimilar thanks to the influence of the Jesuit painters at court – were publicly exposed to non-family members. Although these displays were at times done in the midst of relaxed, unconventional everyday life, the portraits were kept within the imperial palace.[9] Some monarchs had themselves represented as Bodhisattvas: Qianlong as Manjushri and Cixi as Guanyin; this was intended to remind the viewer that the emperor is held to be an emanation of a Bodhisattva. Such representations were destined for Tibetans and Mongols only.

In contrast to Chinese habits regarding imperial portraits, Inner Asian rulers had past emperors' figures carved as statues, as shown by Isabelle Charleux in Chapter 6 (Volume 1), or painted on walls, manuscripts or hanging scrolls. These were public or semi-public representations. In Inner Mongolia, Jönggen Qatun – Altan Qan's third wife – had herself represented in the posture and with the attributes of the Bodhisattva Tara, whose emanation she claimed to be. As standards and 'relics,' these objects were believed to embody the soul of one or several ancestors, and thereby to make them present. Stimulated by the development of Buddhism and the decline of the aristocracy, among other possible factors, Mongols turned from three-dimensional representations of their Khans that received food offerings, to two-dimensional ones.

In another linked phenomenon, in modern times, the statues of Chinggis Khan together with two of his descendants, Ögödei and Qubilai Qan, recently erected on the central square in Ulaanbaatar, in front of the Government palace, reflect how omnipresent the reference to the great founder is in post-socialist Mongolia. Furthermore, as Grégory Delaplace reminds us in Chapter 3 (Volume 2), the fact that these statues replaced mausoleums containing the remains of Sühbaatar, the main hero of Mongolian independence, and Marshall Choibalsan, the 'Mongolian Stalin,' illustrates quite plainly the change that has in recent times occurred in Mongolian power symbols. This

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[9] Never was a Chinese emperor's portrait printed on coins, as were those of Roman emperors.

event thus illustrates, as Grégory Delaplace stresses, not only the promotion of Chinggis Khan as ancestor to the Nation, but also the relegation of Sühbaatar and Choibalsan to being merely dead people. Delaplace's contribution is followed by a 'living testimony' from Françoise Aubin, who publishes here a description of the funerals of Mongolian President Sambuu in May 1972 that she herself was able to attend.

As a substitute for the unlocatable tomb and remains of Chinggis Khan and his successors, the 'relics' of the 'eight white yurts' of Ejen Qoriya kept by Ordos Mongols in Inner Mongolia and dedicated to the cult of Chinggis Khan illustrate at once several aspects of the topic dealt with here: they represented the power of the founding ancestor (the power of the Chinggisids); they were used to legitimate candidates for supreme power; and lastly, they were subject to appropriation by foreign powers in order to affirm their own domination by capturing the prestige of these relics. (Japan failed in this, but China succeeded.)

In many cases, contesting power has involved the construction of imaginary figures to support the dream of an alternative locus of power, or at least of an alternative ideology or identity. Such is the case, for instance, with the process aimed at making Geser – the mythical epic hero common to Tibetans, Mongols and Buryats – into a national cultural emblem of Buryatia when that Autonomous Republic proclaimed its sovereignty in 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet regime (Hamayon 1998). Much the same thing happened at the same time in Kyrgyzstan, but with the hero Manas (see below). Let us note, by the way, that the type of power supported by such imaginary figures is doomed to remain only ideal, for these figures have, in Kantorowicz's words, only 'one' body, the 'mystical,' and not the 'natural.' More precisely, they are doomed abstractly to represent ethnic identity or political ideology, rather than real power wielded by an actual individual.

Another example is that of Burkhanism in the Altai, an early twentieth century movement, which took as a messianic figure Oirot, the more or less historical Oirad Mongolian chief who had defeated Altaians two centuries earlier (cf. for instance Znamenski 2005). The contemporary *tengriantsvo* movements (a Russian neologism built on the Turco-Mongol word *tengri* 'sky')

of Yakutia, Altai and Kyrgyzstan are other examples of attempts in the Inner Asian region to build alternative political ideologies.

However, as demonstrated by Aurélie Biard and Marlène Laruelle in Chapter 2 (Volume 2), the leaders of the Kyrgyz movement resorted to the figure of the epic hero Manas to personalize the underlying concept of *tengri*, which is an abstract politico-religious concept. The authors thus describe a poster published recently in Kyrgyzstan, which represents Manas in full glory, wearing the Kyrgyz traditional hat, the *kalpak*, and sitting enthroned on an eagle (fig. 1). One could ponder over the need of these intellectuals, more or less consciously felt, for a personal and representative figure to support their abstract ideal. In the same fashion, we may stress that the absence of representative figures can be detrimental to the consolidation of political processes, such as the rebuilding of national identity after a crisis. As shown by Marat (2007), newly established republics of Inner Asia have, as a rule, chosen the 'manly warrior' figure. Svetlana Jacquesson stresses in her contribution (Chapter 7, Volume 2) that 'these celebrations contributed to an ever closer association of the president with Manas, giving a mystic turn to the election and role of the chief of state.' She goes on to quote Amantur Japarov to the effect that '[t]hese celebrations made possible the consolidation of the power of the president and the growth of his authority.'

Likewise, Roberte Hamayon examines in Chapter 5 (Volume 2) a recently released Buryat calendar created by a small circle of Buryat intellectuals depicting Chinggis Khan in a very curious way. Analyzing the posture he is given and the many different symbols displayed around him, she highlights the ambiguous character of this representation: it not only makes Chinggis Khan an ahistorical power figure but also dooms this depiction of him to remain a mere figment of the imagination. Far from expressing a real hope for alternative power and identity, this calendar is an example of a subtle process to show at one and the same time both illusion and disillusion about possible changes, revealing the ideological uncertainty of the Buryat circles which created it. Chinggis Khan is a historical character, which is to say that in contrast to such epic heroes as Manas he truly did exist. In the calendar, however, he is dealt

with as if he, like that hero, was nothing more than a mythical figure; furthermore, incorporated into his name on the calendar is the word *tengri,* which serves to further remove him from political realities.

These two chapters highlight that abstract ideas and ideals are more easily promoted if associated with personalized figures, which allows stories to be told about them and insertion of ideas into an easy-to-remember narrative process. In situations where elites dream of a change of regime, the figures they produce serve to personalize the alternative ideology or identity in the shape of an imaginary power-holder. However these studies, as well as Svetlana Jacquesson's chapter on the failure of the attempt to use Manas in Kyrgyzstan, suggest that employment of such purely ideal figures fails to arouse emotions or create conditions for attracting popular adherence.

The figure of Chinggis Khan currently found at every corner of Ulaanbaatar does not so much incarnate the medieval emperor's power as the prestige associated with it, reinterpreted and reinvented as the core of the identity of the modern Mongolian. Similarly, through Chapter 10 (Volume 1) by François de Polignac, we understand how the figure of the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great was in earlier times transformed into a model of sovereignty for Muslim princes. This chapter addresses the question of the use of religious institutions to legitimize and even sacralize political power. De Polignac reminds us that in medieval Arabic legend, Alexander the Great often interacts with the figure of al-Khidr, a symbol of inspired knowledge whose model is found in the *Koran* (*Qur'an*). Comparing these two figures, the author shows that, far from representing a simple opposition between mundane kingly authority using learned knowledge and prophetic spiritual authority, these two categories share many similarities and complement each other. The consubstantial relation between the gift of immortality and that of universal power accounts for the many religious and eschatological implications of the Muslim conception of inspired sovereign.

Social and Ideological Constructions
Immaterial and non-personal representations

Inner Asian societies also abound in immaterial kinds of representations. Thus specific words can be used as symbols of power, as, for instance, those designating the well-known concepts of *kücü*, 'force,' and *su*, 'good luck' or 'fortune,' which are necessary to qualify as ruler in Inner Asian history. Denis Sinor, in Chapter 1 (Volume 1), calls attention to the way medieval leaders' figures are marked with features that make them remarkable, extraordinary and even monstrous or part animal (counting an animal among their ancestors, or having one eye in the middle of the forehead). From a different perspective, Tatiana Skrynnikova in Chapter 4 of this volume – drawing on such names as Börte Činua, 'Bluish Wolf,' and Гооa Maral, 'Fallow Doe' – argues that not just one but both components of the many dual ethnonyms at the time of the formation of the Mongol empire should be translated as animal designations. Sinor argues that such features are typical of a hunting imagery still present and crucial among Inner Asian herders. From this can be derived the interesting suggestion that pastoralism was not taken into account in the descriptions given of the leader; it should be noted that medieval leaders are not reported to have owned large flocks. Sinor nevertheless argues that it was the economic advantages a man was able to secure for his followers that induced other groups to recognize him as their ruler, a proposition confirmed by Sergei Dmitriev in Chapter 8 (Volume 1).

But acquisition of power in this manner was insufficient to justify ongoing rule: to gain an enduring legitimacy, appeal was made to what the author calls the 'supra-natural.' Sources like *The Secret History of the Mongols* thus make the claim that 'heaven grants him strength,' i.e. helps him. This does not, however, mean 'mandates him,' as it has often been interpreted, since he is not supposed to act on heaven's behalf and since a 'human decision' is necessary to confirm this 'supra-natural' help. In other words, the ruler's legitimacy is the outcome of a two-step process: the humans should first acknowledge the supernatural support, and then enforce the power it implies.

What matters is that the initial sign is attributed to the 'supra-natural.'

On the other hand, as shown by Tseveliin Shagdarsürüng in Chapter 11 (Volume 1), medieval Mongol emperors did not make recourse to any 'supra-natural' power to claim peace. Contrary to the image they left in people's imaginations, Shagdarsürüng stresses that Mongol rulers in their diplomatic relations did not represent themselves as warriors, but as peacemakers. Examining the correspondence between two Mongol Emperors, Öljei-tü Qan and Aryun Qan, with the French king Philip the Fair, he emphasizes the importance given by them to peace and the maintaining of harmonious relations. 'Nothing is better than concord,' writes the conciliatory Öljei-tü Qan. Shagdarsürüng goes on to suggest that this policy was actually the continuation of a principle inherited from the founder of the Great Mongol Empire, Chinggis Khan, and maintained by all his descendants until the last ruler of the Yuan dynasty, Toyuyan Temür.

As an example of social construction, Christopher Atwood in Chapter 3 (Volume 1) gives an account of another technique used by the Mongols to impose authority upon conquered populations. Reconsidering current interpretations of the Mongol successor states as marking the victory of agrarian ideologies over Mongol traditions, he stresses that Mongols created in each realm an intermediate buffer class, which was more offensive to the agrarian-bureaucratic class than the Mongol nobility at the top. Atwood then goes on to show how agrarian ideologies treated the intermediate class as an alien intrusion into their projected plan of a smooth transition of the Mongols from nomads into rural gentlemen.

The coexistence of nomadic and sedentary populations within a single state structure is always problematic. Thus, Linda Gardelle offers in Chapter 9 (Volume 2) a contemporary view of the places held by pastoralists in Mongolia and in Mali, focussing on the consciousnesses of politicians. She stresses that while Mongolian herders strongly adhere to their state and regret the decline of the strong education system set up under communist rule, Tuareg nomads do not recognize themselves as part of the Malian state. Whereas nomadism is regarded as an

essential feature of the national character of Mongolia, in Mali it defines a minority.

Social constructions are more easily identified when they are expressed by specific terminologies. Thus Rodica Pop in Chapter 11 (Volume 2) examines the Mongol word *tör*, which has always carried a great political significance on top of being one among many terms conveying ideas of tradition, habit, or practice. While almost synonymous, these words have semantic differences that point to a hierarchy of traditions in a society such as that of the Mongols that emphasises clan relationships. The analysis of the term *tör*, which designates at the same time the wedding ritual and the state, therefore suggests that exogamous alliance is the basic rule of the society, which explains why the wedding ritual is considered to be a 'state affair.' In Chapter 4 (Volume 1), Tatiana Skrynnikova underlines the importance of marriage relations in the building of the Mongol empire itself, a process in which their role was more complex. She shows that the Tayiči'ut and the Mongols, the two leading groups that determined this political process at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, were both marriage partners and rivals in the struggle for power in the region throughout this entire period. These ambiguous relations formed a dual structure that eventually gave rise to a polity, with an internal hierarchy of identities serving to limit access to power.

On the whole, conceptions and structures of power can be made concrete not only by words, but also by ritualizing its enforcement. Thus, during the Qing period in Mongolia, social hierarchy was made material through differences in funerary practices. Indeed, while dead bodies of the nobility were embalmed and installed in wooden huts, buried, or cremated and enshrined in stupas, those of the commoners were abandoned in the open air and left to carnivorous animals; the preservation of 'white bones' stood in opposition to the scattering of 'black' ones (Delaplace 2006). In this connection, we may consider the Chinese bureaucracy created by the ideal of Legalism under the first Chinese emperor, Qin Shihuang, as a highly ritualized power structure based on the law. This structure, with its highly ritualized character, created a respectability of power, allowing

the actual ruler-in-chief to remain in the background while state officials were its effective agents at each level, allotting to subjects both rewards and punishments (Vandermeersch 1987). This way of ruling – where the ruler sees everything but remains himself invisible – can be compared to the 'panoptic' device analysed by Michel Foucault (1977 [1975]) on the basis of Jeremy Bentham's theory. Panoptism makes surveillance superfluous; prisoners, by being always susceptible to being watched, constantly submit to discipline. However, this way of ruling requires, in practice, representations of all kinds, more or less ritualized, including such strictly material representations as forms to fill out and stamps to put upon the forms. Those who accept such representations cannot attack the supreme power-holder, or contest the nature of his power, since the only thing accessible is what is exhibited – the form or the stamp, and not the lord.

Immaterial and personal representations

Most often, power is linked to a specific ruling clan, class or dynasty, which means that any candidate for power-holding must be in the line of the dead members of this clan or dynasty. However, in her analysis of Sultan Baybars' singular access to power through double regicide in Chapter 2 (Volume 1), Denise Aigle shows how killing a king does not mean destroying the kingdom. Baybars was a Mamluk who managed to take the place of the Sultan he had killed. He even managed to be blessed with the qualities of the ideal Muslim leader, despite his complete lack of lineage – he had been bought as a slave in the Qipchaq steppe – and the double regicide he had committed.

While it is common in both sedentary and nomadic societies to claim legitimacy on the basis of purported ascendants, the way this is expressed can differ. Thus, in his oral presentation at the Paris conference in 2006, François-Ömer Akakça stressed that having a prestigious ancestry, religious or secular, is one of the best ways to stake a claim to political role in contemporary Turkmen society. Lacking legitimizing ancestry, however, a candidate for power may instead maneuver to insert himself into a lineage of 'warriors aided by God.' Thus, there are two main, and not mutually exclusive, ways of making

social relationships fit the descent principle: firstly, by embedding non-related groups into the main genealogy; and secondly, by promoting parallel and therefore concurrent forms of lineage organization (for example religious vs. secular). Focusing on the political economy of late-nineteenth-century Turkmen saintly lineages (small groups that claim descent from the Prophet or one of the four Caliphs and act as religious specialists), middlemen and traders of slaves, Akakça showed how descent helped formalize or even disguise client-patron relationships as legitimate relations between putatively equal lineages.

Writing the genealogies of Mongol and Türk nobilities was also an important element in the construction and clarification of the Qing dynasty's power network through the regulation of intermarriage. Conversely, such practices as destroying genealogical records or tombs, and suppressing clans' names, were sometimes performed so as to de-legitimize previous dynasties.

As a counterpoint to these discussions about the place of kinship relations in Inner Asian power structures, David Sneath (Chapter 12 of Volume 1) proposes a critical reflection on the discourse of 'tribalism' usually employed to describe pastoral society's so-called 'traditional' polities. Going through the literature dedicated to socio-political organization, he pitilessly deconstructs the idea that pastoral societies were originally segmentary societies, wholly organized as egalitarian unilineal descent groups. Instead, Sneath shows that whatever period of Inner Asian history one considers, hints of the presence of a ruling aristocracy may be found. Sneath thus quite convincingly shakes the assumption that Inner Asian societies are originally segmentary, tribal societies, in which the clanic institution decayed as their integration to foreign states progressed. On the contrary, he highlights that in many cases, such as the Kazakh and Kyrgyz societies, state structures like the Tsarist regime emphasized the importance of clanship to buttress political domination. This analysis confirms the impression produced by reading the results of the 1897 census, where, for instance, no Buryat *ulus* coincides with a single clan (Patkanov 1912), in spite

opposition to the government, which claim to present an alternative 'Kyrgyz way.' Situated in the north, the country's capital is itself a symbol of power. Jacquesson argues that comparison of references and representations chosen by the capital with those preferred by local powers may clarify the conception of power in Kyrgyzstan as well as the continuity and change of its representations. Thus, while the state administration placed itself under the auspices of the epic hero Manas in 1992, 'what was to be taken into consideration by the "bottom" were not claims of destiny but claims of descent and origin,' to such an extent that the genealogies had come to compete with the state since both institutions aimed at encompassment by invading the public space. 'Those who contested the state and its chief...used descent and genealogy to legitimize their aspirations to power and the right to exercise it.'

Finally, in Chapter 4 (Volume 2), Rebecca Empson shows that it was not only official state rituals that were used to represent political claims. Describing how the Buryats emigrated to East Mongolia, she goes on to explore their history through their shamanic rituals and to discuss how they have managed to represent their relationship to different parts of the land they inhabit by claiming communication with local spirits or 'land masters.' Recounting a ritual of regeneration performed at a particular cave, in which people are supposed to enclose themselves, Empson stresses the opposition between two conceptions of the relationship between people and the land. In one, enacted by shamans, land and people 'create each other' through mutual inclusion. The other, promoted through the newly established 'National Park,' assumes that land will not grow unless people are excluded from it.

Human beings as representations
But representations of power can be human beings themselves, as stressed already by Olivier Hekster and Richard Fowler (2005) in their discussions of Roman and Near Eastern antiquity. Inner Asia also abounds in such examples: the first Manchu emperors organized ritualized hunts at Mulan and grandiose receptions at Chengde for the Mongol lords; on these occasions, the Mongol lords could be close to the emperor in a much less

had no right to participate or receive their share of the meat in the banquet given to the ancestors, as illustrated by the famous episode of *The Secret History of the Mongols* where, after her husband's death, 'Lady Hö'elün [...] was left out of the sacrificial meal' (§70, Rachewiltz 2004: 17) as well as by the Buryat *tailga(n)* of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Hangalov 1958-60; Tugutov 1978; Sanžeev 1926-1927; Hamayon 1990: 637-43).

Similarly, while sharing game does not constitute a ritual in and of itself, when used to sacralize the leader's authority it necessarily becomes more or less ritualized in its form, and more importantly, in its function. Thus, Dmitriev (Chapter 8 of Volume 1) argues that a potential leader generously distributes material goods so as to increase his authority within his community. The more he distributes, the greater his prestige and the more persuasive his argument that he should become the leader. The author shows that this practice comes from the hunting lifestyle, where game is allegedly obtained thanks to the hunter's 'fortune,' a concept that commands one's authority; referring to several sources (including §252 of the *Secret History of the Mongols*), he stresses that what the leader redistributes is what he had his followers collect in his name.

In modern times as well, the legitimation of power is still highly ritualized, as Dulam and Bianquis show in Chapter 1 (Volume 2). Examining the state rituals organized by the government of Mongolia in 2006, the authors of that chapter point to the fact that they were mainly inspired by the evocation of Chinggis Khan, even if it meant re-creating new standards and forms of worship. But it also included references to the 85 years of the Revolution, the *Naadam*, and some changes in the capital city. The purpose of this 2006 celebration was all-encompassing, with Chinggis as keystone of the whole.

A wide variety of social performances can play a role in the image a given power enjoys in traditional societies, including performances of epic tales, rituals, satirical songs and various other pieces of oral 'poetry' aimed at praising, cursing, or blaming. In Chapter 7 (Volume 2), Svetlana Jacquesson offers an insight into the official attempts at political 'modernization,' and describes various nationalist or neo-traditionalist groupings, in

onwards, by examining precisely how mundane rulers and religious dignitaries interacted in practice at particular places and times. She discusses the relation between the Dukes of the Urad Three Banners and the monasteries in that territory, and specifically the relationship between the Dukes of the West Urad Banner and the Mergen Monastery. In the end, Humphrey argues that an extremely close relation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries affected, on the one hand, the values by which the Dukes ruled, and on the other hand, the ways in which Buddhism was practiced. The political and religious aspects tend all the more to be merged since power is associated with one specific person to the point of being identified with it, i.e. 'personified.'[11]

Arthur M. Hocart (1970 [1936]: 214) emphasized the political advantages of the personalization of power in a famous ironical comment:

> We have lost the secret [...] of making it a joy to pay taxes. We have eliminated the personal element, and think ourselves mightily superior in that we have done so. It is that personal element which has been the success of monarchy in the past [...]. There is no one to whom one can give, and no one from whom one can receive: just a vast automatic machine into which the money must be dropped, and from which some may be returned.

With the 'personalization' of power, it seems that we reach the limits we have set for the notion of 'representation': in such cases, it might be more appropriate to speak of 'incarnation' or 'embodiment' of power rather than merely of its 'representation.' Such personalization may occur with very different types of power: with dictators on the one hand (Turkmenbash, Mao Zedong), but also with particularly charismatic leaders on the other, and more broadly with all the instances resorting to what is called 'personality cult.' Anyhow, such leaders make their followers feel not only 'represented,' but also, so to speak, incorporated in and transcended by their

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[11] Cf. for instance the merging of political and religious power in the historical figure of the Dalai Lama until 1949.

documented in the *Mongol-Oirat Regulations of 1640*, which make clear the mutual interests both aristocracies had in controlling their subjects and preventing commoners from defecting to the jurisdictions of other nobles.[35] It is clear from this and other documents that the basic power relations between nobility and their subjects predate Manchu administration, which only really became established in most of Mongolia in the eighteenth century. Nobles were free from taxes and corvée labour, enjoyed preferential treatment under the law, and had powers over their personal subjects that almost resembled forms of ownership – they often donated them to Buddhist clergy, for example (Bawden 1968: 106). Indeed, the Manchus had to prohibit the Mongol aristocracy's habit of selling and giving away their *qamjilγa* (*hamžlaga* in Cyrillic) domestic servants and *albatu* (*albat* in Cyrillic) subjects (Bold 2001: 123). In many respects, the position of subjects seems comparable to that of the Chinggisid period.

Having abandoned the notion that the assumed characteristics of putative 'tribal' society would reassert themselves in the interregnum, there is no reason to suppose that these aristocratic orders were transformed between the Chinggisid and pre-Qing periods in which they resemble each other so closely. Power was largely distributed among the aristocracy and the extent to which they were integrated into larger imperial polities varied with the historical fortunes of the different imperial projects that emerged in this period: the Chinggisid, Tümet, Manchu and Oirat. The highly centralised

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(2000:168) – an extraordinary description for a Chinggisid prince who had inherited the rich apanage of the late Yuan empire.

[35] The code states, for example: 'Those (people) who go to another *qosiγu* [administrative unit] and those who move between them shall be gathered and seized. If they have no *otoγ* [pasture and commoners belonging to a noble] they shall belong to an *otoγ*; if they have no *ayimaγ* [administrative division] they shall belong to an *ayimaγ*.' The regulations detail the punishments in the case of subjects leaving their allotted *nutuγ* [pastoral area] (Altangerel 1998: 70). This is my translation of this passage. For alternative wordings in Russian and English, see Dylykov 1981: 53, 117; and Bold 2001: 117.

onwards, by examining precisely how mundane rulers and religious dignitaries interacted in practice at particular places and times. She discusses the relation between the Dukes of the Urad Three Banners and the monasteries in that territory, and specifically the relationship between the Dukes of the West Urad Banner and the Mergen Monastery. In the end, Humphrey argues that an extremely close relation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries affected, on the one hand, the values by which the Dukes ruled, and on the other hand, the ways in which Buddhism was practiced. The political and religious aspects tend all the more to be merged since power is associated with one specific person to the point of being identified with it, i.e. 'personified.'[11]

Arthur M. Hocart (1970 [1936]: 214) emphasized the political advantages of the personalization of power in a famous ironical comment:

> We have lost the secret [...] of making it a joy to pay taxes. We have eliminated the personal element, and think ourselves mightily superior in that we have done so. It is that personal element which has been the success of monarchy in the past [...]. There is no one to whom one can give, and no one from whom one can receive: just a vast automatic machine into which the money must be dropped, and from which some may be returned.

With the 'personalization' of power, it seems that we reach the limits we have set for the notion of 'representation': in such cases, it might be more appropriate to speak of 'incarnation' or 'embodiment' of power rather than merely of its 'representation.' Such personalization may occur with very different types of power: with dictators on the one hand (Turkmenbash, Mao Zedong), but also with particularly charismatic leaders on the other, and more broadly with all the instances resorting to what is called 'personality cult.' Anyhow, such leaders make their followers feel not only 'represented,' but also, so to speak, incorporated in and transcended by their

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[11] Cf. for instance the merging of political and religious power in the historical figure of the Dalai Lama until 1949.

person. The degree to which a leader is allowed or expected to personalize power also varies according to situations: while he is only expected to 'represent' his country in international meetings or visits, in cases of important political events, crises or war it may become pivotal that the head of a state give his citizens the feeling that he 'incarnates' or 'embodies' the nation.

The non-identity of the representer and the represented
Nevertheless, as stressed at the beginning of this introduction, the notion of representation implies by definition a *non-identity* between what the author aimed to represent and what is actually presented, as we see, for instance, when comparing a given power and the emblem aimed at making it operate. To put it another way, there is a *distance* between a given power and its representations. This point has been phrased brilliantly by Louis Marin (2005[1980]: 72), whose work on French monarchy also stressed the pivotal use of representations in the exercise of power:

> Dans cette acception du terme, dans le lieu de la représentation, il y a une absence, un autre, et représenter c'est au fond opérer une substitution, la substitution de quelque chose à la place de cet autre, de quelque chose qui est, si j'ose dire, le 'même' que cet autre; qui lui ressemble, qui lui est proche: c'est là ce que j'appellerai le premier effet de la représentation, faire comme si l'absent était ici maintenant. Entendez bien 'faire comme si.' Il ne s'agit pas de sa présence mais il s'agit d'un *effet de présence* (emphasis added).

Marin emphasizes that representing consists in 'doing as if' the absent was present; such representation thus produces not only mere presence, but an *effect of presence*, conveyed by the inalienable distance between the absent thing and its present representation. We want to stress three important implications of this necessary, irreducible distance.

Firstly, the non-identity between the representer and the represented implies that a given power structure may be represented through several possible props, which do not have the same implications and effects. Different aspects or functions

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of power may be represented through different artifacts or institutions, and the process of representing therefore implies a choice depending on the intended use. This is what makes representations more than mere signs: representations are actual means of action applied to those who perceive them. Their efficiency depends on their appropriate use. From this point of view, there seems to be no specifically nomadic type of power representation, and more broadly, no difference between sedentary and nomadic states; the chapters of this volume rather suggest that in both nomadic and sedentary power structures, various representational techniques are used at different times in different situations. One difference in the exercise of power within nomadic and sedentary societies has been pointed out by Denis Sinor, who astutely remarked that while nomads can escape the political power by flying away to remote parts of their country, sedentary people cannot.[12]

Secondly and correlatively, this non-identity between what represents and what is represented creates space for manipulation, hence for distortion; powers find it hard not to manipulate their own representations in some way or another. We might even go so far as to say that representations of power are meant to do what the power-holder himself cannot do. Let us recall that the management of the dead occupies a special place in the procedures of political representation: a domain where manipulation is particularly frequent is the use of genealogies, as addressed by several papers, and more broadly all types of lineage strategies, insofar as they imply reference to dead people. Within nomadic societies, the marking of land with funerary prints represents and actualizes rights over a given space. Baldaev (1970) relates several stories where members of displaced lineages moved their 'ancestors' stones' (both sacrificial altars and territory markers) from their former to their new territory in order to take with them the immaterial goods that go with the stones: protection, 'grace,' and territory rights.

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[12] One should note however that this argument applies only insofar as the leaders themselves are not nomads, a very rare case in ancient times. See also the comments of David Sneath, in Chapter 12 of Volume 1.

Similarly, let us remember how the Mongolian Communist Party erected statues for its dead heroes, toppled at the end of its rule, not to mention how Chinggis Khan became the tutelary power of post-socialist Mongolia, guarantor of the legality of the present regime's rhetoric and symbolic support of some of the modern world's most prized values: defense of human rights and protection of the environment (Aubin 1993).

In a more general manner, it is not unusual for a candidate for leadership to manipulate or appropriate symbols of power characteristic of stronger rulers. Thus, in 1572, according to Mongolian narratives, Altan Khan appropriated a major symbol of power from the Chinese when he had Chinese workers build his capital, Hohhot (Kökeqota), on the model of the Yuan dynasty's Dadu (Beijing) (Charleux 2007). The Chinese saw this differently: they granted the city (actually a castle) the title 'City returned to [Chinese] civilisation' or 'city of those who have come to recognize civilisation' (Guihua cheng 歸化城). The Chinese rejoiced that the Tümed Mongols had adopted Buddhism and (apparently) become acculturated,[13] believing that they would as a consequence become 'cooked barbarians' and respect the peace treaty. It would be worth examining thoroughly cases of nomads borrowing, rejecting, or diverting the symbols of power of sedentary societies, whether in order to forge an alliance or to harden opposition.

Thirdly, the distance created by the non-identity between what is 'represented' and what is 'representing' makes it impossible to dissociate the political from the religious or at least sacred aspects of power. The question is rather to what extent political power necessarily resorts to religion to be legitimized and exerted, relying upon connections with the sacred in order to be respected. This aspect, further investigated and nuanced in Chapter 10 (Volume 1) by François de Polignac, and Chapter 6 (Volume 2) by Caroline Humphrey, is a strong incentive to

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[13] However, Altan Khan did not act as a Chinese sovereign: his biography does not reveal him following the way of such as Qubilai in adopting Chinese technologies of governance like the proclamation of a new era or dynasty, or publication of a new calendar or currency (see the criteria established by Franke 1994 [1978]: 25).

consider the involvement of religious institutions in access to, or exercise of, political power; or, conversely, to consider the use of religious procedures to confirm a power-holder's position. One could, for example, discuss attempts at promoting a supreme deity as a source of legitimacy – as Biard and Laruelle do in Chapter 2 (Volume 2) with the example of the Kyrgyz *tengriantsvo* movement – or question the respective attitudes of political and religious institutions towards one another.[14]

The distance between the representing and the represented can be reduced to almost nothing when, as already stressed, power is highly personalized and its 'effect of presence' thus made pervasive throughout society. Even in these cases, though, the merging is never fully realized, as we know that dictatures do not always die with dictators. Grégory Delaplace shows in Chapter 3 (Volume 2), through a description of Marshal Choibalsan's funerals, that Kantorowicz' paradigm of the king's two bodies can be quite adequately transposed to Soviet-style power structures, although in this case the emphasis on the natural body of the leader – the body with which he fought to liberate the country, the body he exhausted at work for the sake of the nation – is much greater. The natural body of the communist leader – above all, that of Lenin, of course – is thus conceived and manipulated as a means of mystical communion with the spirit of communism; in this context, the spiritual body is collapsed into the natural one. In such cases we see an apparent *merging* of the representer and the represented. But even there, the powerful effect of the denial of the intrinsic duality of representation resides in the fact that these (i.e. the representer and the represented) *are* (i.e. *remain*) actually distinct. Although the spirit of communism (the represented) was initially made to merge with the body of Lenin or Choibalsan (the representer) through highly emotional funerary rituals and commemorations, they can be separated again through reverse rituals relegating the body to a mere natural envelope. Therefore,

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[14] Thus, while it is usually said that the early Mongol rulers presented an image of religious tolerance in their rule, they in fact wanted officiants of other religions to pray for the Khan and in exchange exempted them from paying taxes (Atwood 2004).

even in this case the power of representations comes from the 'effect of presence' (Marin cf. infra) created by the fact that the representer substitutes for the represented.

The notion of merging could apply at another level, as well: between enforcing power and manipulating its representations. Indeed, the contributions to these volumes have led us to wonder to what extent representations, after all, *make* power. As Clifford Geertz (1983: 124-5) puts it:

> The very thing that the elaborate mystique of court ceremonial is supposed to conceal – that majesty is made, not born – is demonstrated by it. A woman is not a duchess a hundred yards from a carriage.

But conversely, would a carriage with a mere peasant inside 'represent' power? Is this not that what Louis Marin (2005 [1980]: 75) says when he argues that power – or rather the transformation of 'might' (French 'puissance') into actual 'power' (French 'pouvoir') – is created through the process of representing? In the same way as we wondered whether exerting power could be reduced to the manipulating of its representations, we might wonder, on the contrary, to what extent challenging or opposing it can be achieved through merely distorting or even 'hijacking' them. In other words, the representations of power are not mere depictions. They are double-edged weapons: while they are originally aimed at serving the power structures that produce them, they may well be turned back against them.

Whether one uses representations for or against those who produce them, the key issue all these contributions finally address is that of the efficacy of those representations. Is there a single identifiable source of efficacy? That question will need to be explored in more detail elsewhere. But be that as it may, the process of making representations always involves a device – whether a mere convention or a more sophisticated ritual – that makes them credible and therefore effective. In other words, not only do representations legitimate the power structure, but the power structure should in turn legitimate its representations. But even though everything has been done to legitimate and to a certain extent animate representations, this aim is not necessarily

achieved. Representations may fail to gain adherence. No one can compel citizens to respect the symbols of a power structure, or force them to feel emotionally attached to it.

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The Acquisition, The Legitimation, The Confirmation And The Limitations Of Political Power In Medieval Inner Asia

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When Jesus went into Capernaum there came to him a centurion, beseeching him 'Lord my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in great pain. Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion replied, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof: but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, go and he goes and to another, come and he comes; and to my servant, do this and he does it.'

The capability of one human being to make other human beings perform or abstain from performing certain actions is a transitive ability or property that cannot manifest itself in a vacuum, and can only be activated in conjunction with its counterpart, namely obedience. Power and obedience are opposed and complementary. There can be no authority in the abstract, there must be someone who recognizes it. No order can be given if there is no subject to follow it. Obedience, of course, can be obtained by physical or mental coercion, but as is typically the case it can be entirely voluntary, for instance with members of religious orders or even the military who joined their formation voluntarily. In this paper, 'political power' will mean the capability of one person to impose his or her will on a larger community, on persons with whom there is no direct, personal contact.

Acquisition

The basic mechanism for the acquisition of political power implies that one individual can, by whatever means, convince or

persuade others that it is to their advantage to follow his or her leadership, i.e. obey his or her orders. The core group reaching such a conclusion may be quite small, such as was the case in the early stages of the rise of Chinggis. *The Secret History of the Mongols* reports (§123)[1] that three men, Altan, Qucar, and Saca Beki, none of them of outstanding importance, decided among themselves to make Chinggis a ruler. They informed him of their decision, he swore an oath of allegiance and, to quote, 'made him *qan*' (*qan bolqaba*). The act was quite unceremonious and amounted to little more than the recognition by three ambitious men that by 'electing' Chinggis they could best serve their own interest, and that of a small group of people with whom they felt solidarity.

To be of consequence, their choice needed to be approved by a larger gathering and this could happen only after the recognition that Chinggis had proven himself to be an efficacious leader. The acclamation happened in 1206. According to *The Secret History of the Mongols* (§202), '... [When] the people of the felt-tents had been brought to allegiance, in the Year of the Tiger [1206] they all gathered at the source of the Onan (river). They hoisted the white standard with nine tails and there they gave Chingis Qaghan [Qaγan] the title of *qan*.' It will be noted that this recognition came *after* 'the people of the felt-tents had been brought to allegiance.' Thus assent was publicly given on the basis of a choice proposed by a small group of people. Françoise Aubin and Roberte Hamayon have put it clearly: 'il [Chinggis] est promu par l'accord de quelques-uns de ses fidèles et l'on se rallie à lui en raison de ses mérites, comme homme, comme guerrier et comme dirigeant, sans qu'il soit besoin d'une intervention divine' (Aubin and Hamayon 2002: 83). In its essence, the situation was similar to that which occurred in the Roman Empire with, for instance, Titus (AD 79-81). In a prearranged way, Titus followed his father Vespasian (69-79) to the throne. The decisive moment of the commencement of his reign, however, was his presentation

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[1] Throughout this essay I use the edition and translation of *The Secret History of the Mongols* by Rachewiltz 2004. *SHM* stands for *The Secret History of the Mongols*.

as the new sovereign to the legions and their acclamation welcoming him as Imperator (Hodgkin 1880-1889: vol. 1, 206). Since there was but one candidate, the Inner Asian ruler was not 'elected' in the strict sense of the word. He was simply confirmed in his position by a fairly large assembly, which may or may not have represented the will of the majority of the people over whom he was to rule.

In the rise of Chinggis Qan, we can clearly follow a three-step development. First, he secures for himself the devotion of a few individuals – we may call them 'friends'; second, with their help he physically establishes his power over a relatively small group of people, let us say a 'tribe'; third, this fait accompli is solemnly recognized in an elaborate ceremony, performed in the presence of, theoretically, the whole people.

Unlike in a modern democracy, where people elect their leaders on the assumption that these will perform their tasks adequately, in medieval Inner Asia it would seem that the leader was elected in recognition of proven capacity. The snowballing support given to a leader-to-be is quite dramatically expressed in the eighth century Old Turkic inscriptions of the Orkhon:

> (Kül Tegin E11-12) My father the qaghan *[qaɣan]* started with seventeen men. Having heard the news those who were in the towns went up into the mountains, those in the mountains descended and they were seventy. Since Heaven granted him strength, the warriors of my father were like wolves and his enemies were like sheep. Leading campaigns forward and backward he gathered men, and they were seven hundred. And when they were seven hundred he organized and ordered the people which had lost its state and its kaghan, the people which was enslaved, the people which had lost its Turkic institutions.[2]

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[2] The most recent edition of the Kül Tegin inscription can be found in Berta 2004: 89-205.

The ruler then could proudly state that, 'I clothed the naked, I made the poor rich and the few I made them numerous.'[3] To use modern political jargon, 'he delivered.'

Let me give another example of the role the subjects' well-being played in the choice of their ruler. At the end of the ninth century, Abaoji (872-906), founder of the Kitan state, was thrice reelected by his tribe for three-year terms. At the end of the last he was allowed to create a new tribe on his own, which he moved to a region rich in coal, iron, and salt. The economic advantages he was able to secure for his followers induced the other tribes to recognize him as their ruler (Stein 1940: 51). The first chieftain of the Jurchen was elected 'on account of his being able to manage their affairs' (Franke 1975: 149).

The descendants of an elected ruler – the founder as it were of a dynasty – were strong candidates for the succession but the procedure was complicated by the multiplicity of direct male descendants, most of them possible candidates.[4]

Mention should be made of probably apocryphal instances in which the ruler is selected through a competition, a fictional joust, in which he establishes his superiority over the other contenders. Thus, for example, Ashina, the ancestor of the Türk dynasty that was to rule in Mongolia from the middle of the sixth century, is said to have been elected by his nine half-brothers because he could jump highest up on a tree (Sinor 1982: 227). According to the Persian historian Juvaini (1226-1283), Buqu Qan, the first fictional ruler of the Uyghur, who together with four brothers was born in miraculous circumstances, was made *qan* because he was 'superior to the other children in beauty of features and strength of mind; moreover he knew all the tongues and writings of the different peoples.'[5] In other

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[3] (Kül Tegin E29) *yalïng bodunuɣ tonluɣ(ïï(ɣan bodunu(ɣ bay qïltïm*; (Kül Tegin S10) *yoq ïï(ɣan bodunuɣ(qop qubratdïm ïï(ɣan bodunuɣ(bay qïltïm az bodunɒɣ öküš qïltïm.*

[4] Drompp 1991 examined in great detail this question as it applied to the Türks.

[5] Boyle 1958: vol. 1, 57; Sinor 1993: 245.

instances the selection of the ruler has been described as the result of some elaborate lottery.[6]

Election, in the modern application of the term, is attested in the well documented cases of the Great Qans Güyük (1246-1248) and Möngke (1251-1259). Both were elected by great assemblies, *quriltai*, in the midst of fierce contestation by peaceful means, the elections preceded by protracted and intense lobbying and negotiations, in which the ladies Töregene and Sorqoqtani Beki, respectively the mothers of Güyük and of Möngke, played key roles.[7]

On the basis of the above-mentioned examples, it may be inferred, that the acquisition of power in medieval Inner Asia did not differ substantially from the political processes which have developed or still develop in other parts of the world and at other times. It behooves the 'candidate' – if I may allowed to use such a modern term here – to gather around him a group of men who believe that their, and their followers' interest will best be served by following the Candidate's (and I switch now to capitalization) leadership by obeying his orders. It strengthens the Candidate's chances if his person can be linked to some supernatural elements, such as, for example, by attributing to him a non-human ancestry. Whether the small group of original followers believed in these extra-human connections must remain an open question. Once in power, success of the ruler could be attributed to divine help, thus further strengthening his hold on his followers and subjects.

Legitimation[8]

For the founder of a dynasty, the acquisition of power is usually deemed insufficient to justify ongoing rule; appeal is made to the supranatural. Linkage to the non-human can be of two sorts. The first of these can be quite direct, the ruler's persona is linked to

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[6] For some examples, see Sinor 1993: 242-3.

[7] On the intense, often murderous conflicts that marked many successions in the Mongol Empire, see the fine study of Jackson 1978.

[8] While not directly cited in this short essay, on this subject see the excellent and wide-ranging studies of Herbert Franke 1978; and Hok-lam Chan 1984.

an object, a phenomenon or an animal quite well known. For instance, our sources tell us that the just mentioned Abaoji was born of a sun-ray and had at his birth the body of a three-year-old child. In two of the three legends of origin of the Türks reported in Chinese sources, the first Türk ruler descends from a she-wolf (see Sinor 1982). The three men who decided to make Chinggis a *qan* had known him and his family quite well, but by the time *The Secret History of the Mongols* was written it was deemed necessary to trace his genealogy through twenty-two imaginary generations (he being in the twenty-third), to the union of a Blue-Grey Wolf (Börte Chino [Börte Cino]) and a Fallow Doe (Goa Maral).[9]

In some instances, not only is the ruler's earliest traceable ancestor an animal, but among his ancestors appear quite a few abnormal beings. In the twelfth generation[10] before Chinggis appears Du'a Soqor, who 'had a single eye in the middle of his forehead: with it he could see for a distance of three stages.' This quality may be useful but it is certainly improper, perhaps slightly disreputable, so it is not surprising that Chinggis/Temüjin will descend not from him but from the lineage of his brother, Dobun Mergen, whose wife Alan Qo'a gave birth to five sons: two (Belgünütei and Bügünütei) from Dobun Mergen and three others (Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodoncar Mungqaq) 'from a resplendent yellow man who entered by the light of the smoke hole or the door-top of the tent and rubbed her belly' (*SHM* §21). In this case, tradition chose not the 'regular' children but one of the three 'unnatural' boys, those of doubtful origin, and even among them it was Bodoncar who, we are told 'was a fool and a half-wit.'[11]

Among the ancestors of the Kitan rulers some were very uncanny indeed. One of them, called Naihe, we are informed, was nothing but a human skull hidden in a felt tent. He would assume human form and appear in public but on rare occasions. Another chief Kuahe, when not in public, wore the head and the

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[9] *SHM* §1; Rachewiltz 2004: 1.
[10] For a detailed study of the Chinggisid genealogy, see Rybatzki 2006.
[11] *SHM* §23. For an analysis of the later, Islamic, versions of Chinggis' origin see Aigle 2000.

skin of a boar: he *was* a boar. Both chiefs disappeared forever when their real identities were revealed (Stein 1940: 12). One is not he who appears in public but he who appears in private.

The second type of non-human connection links the ruler to an intangible, supra-terrestrial power; let me put it simply: to a divinity. I would go along with Di Cosmo's felicitous view that 'the sacral sanction of political rule was an ancient belief initially shared by both northerners and Chinese that eventually generated, in China, a proper doctrine of Heaven's Mandate, and among the Hsiung-nu [Xiongnu], the notion of a legitimizing supernatural deity' (Di Cosmo 2002: 172). In fact, by implication, this political doctrine presupposes the existence of a monotheistic belief.

It is most important not to confuse two concepts. The recognition that God's help was needed or even instrumental in achieving a certain action does not imply that God mandated its accomplishment. I might say and believe that 'with God's help I will finish writing this article,' without suggesting that God mandated me to do so. The above-cited Old Turkic formula 'since Heaven granted him strength' *tengri küc birtük ücün*[12] uses in part the very same words which some five hundred years later occurred in *The Secret History of the Mongols* attributed to Chinggis himself: '...by the strength of Eternal Heaven (*möngke tengri-yin kücün-tür*),[13] my power has been increased by Heaven and Earth and I have brought the entire people to allegiance, causing them to come under my sole rule.'[14] This statement implies divine help but not divine mandate. Peter Jackson observes correctly that *The Secret History* mentions Heaven's mandate only once in words spoken not by Chinggis but by a shaman and that the context shows that rule over the Mongols and not over the whole world is implied (Jackson 2006: 4). It is to be noted that, unlike the Türk ruler, who claimed that he 'made the poor rich and the few numerous,' in *The Secret History* – written after Chinggis' death – Chinggis does not boast

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[12] Kül Tegin East 12.

[13] I transpose into the system of transcription used for Classical Mongol the short passages cited from the *SHM*.

[14] *SHM* §224; Rachewiltz 2004: vol. 1, 152.

of previous successes to assert his claim to power but attributes it to divine grace.

The ruler's virtue, strength, is so great that it extends even to deeds done on his behalf by others. Following his successful campaign in the West, Batu sends the message to his uncle the Great *Qan* Ögedei: 'By the strength of Eternal Heaven and the good fortune of my uncle the Kaghan (*möngke tenggeri-yin kücün-tür Qa'an abaqa-yin su-tur*), I have destroyed the city of Meget....'[15] Thus Batu attributes his own victory to the virtue of his uncle (*abaqa*) the ruler (Rachewiltz 2004: vol. 2, 355). Mongol *su/sutai* corresponds to Turkic *qut, qutlug* (§74). Hö'elün [Ö'elün] feeds her *sutan kö'üd-iyen* 'her sons favored with Heaven's good fortune' (Rachewiltz 2004: vol. 2, 355).

Our earlier data are not as clear-cut. In the Terkh inscription, the second Uyghur monarch, El-etmiš Bilge Qaghan, known also as Bayan-čur (r. 747-759), claimed – in words almost identical with those used in the Orkhon inscriptions – that he was favored 'by the blue sky above' and 'the brown earth below,' the very powers which had lent their support to the Türk rulers of yore.[16] So the ruler has the support of the divinity, but does not act on its behalf. The formula evokes the *Deo gratias* claim of European kingships.

Less clear is the interpretation of some other titles borne by the rulers of the Uyghur empire in Mongolia. The most interesting among them may well be that mentioned in a Middle Persian text possibly referring to the third Uyghur lord Bügü Qan (r. 759-779), which reads *uluy ilig tengride qut bulmïš erdemin il tutmïš alp külüg Bilge qaghan*, which I would translate (ignoring here the first two words): 'Bilge Qaghan who received good fortune from God and (who) through his virtue maintained the realm.' Divine help and human endeavor are here jointly presented (Rybatzki 2000: 258.). The titles of other Uyghur rulers, the ninth (r. 808-821), for example, or the twelfth (r. 832-839), stated that they had received *qut*, 'good fortune,' from the

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[15] *SHM* §275; Rachewiltz 2004: vol. 1, 206.
[16] Klyashtorny 1982: 342. I have adopted the system first used by Chavannes, to number the Uyghur rulers in the order of their succession.

Moon God (*ai tengride qut bulmïš*) or, as was the case for the tenth (r. 821-824), from the Sun God (*kün tengride qut bulmïš*) (Hamilton 1955: 140).

While in the instances cited the ruler claims to have received divine help in his activities, reference to divine mandate appears only in documents destined to foreign potentates warning them with various degrees of intensity of the sender's supranatural connections. The strongest claim to universal rule is made in the ultimatum sent probably by the Great Qan Ögedei and delivered in 1238 by the Dominican Julian to King Béla IV of Hungary. The preamble reads: *Ego, Chaym, nuntius regis celestis, cui dedit potentiam super terram subicientes mihi se exaltare et deprimere adversantes...*, 'I am the Khan, messenger of the Celestial King, to whom he has given the power on earth to exalt those who submit to me and to cast down the adversaries...'[17] The Franciscan William Rubruck brings to King Louis IX of France 'the decree of the eternal God' (*preceptum eterni Dei*), namely: 'In Heaven there is only one eternal God, and on earth let there be only one lord: Chinggis khan' (Jackson 1990: 245). Similarly unequivocal language is used, for example, in the letter sent in 1262 by the Ilkhan Hülegü to King Louis IX of France: *In excelsis ego sum Deus omnipotens solus et te super gentes et regna constitui dominatorem et regem fieri totius orbis*, 'I am the one almighty God in the highest and I have set thee above the nations and kingdoms to be master and ruler of the entire world' (Jackson 2006: 8-9). Thomas Hodgkin cited Zosimus speaking of the imperial dignity as the 'Lordship of the Universe' (*hé tón holón arkhé*) and speculated, 'If it would be possible to penetrate into the secret thoughts of those long-vanished wearers of the purple, one would eagerly desire to know under what aspect the imperial deification presented itself to their minds' (Hodgkin 1880-1889: I, 203). The question would be relevant also for the Chinggisid concept of rule. Interestingly, the claim of the Chinese emperors that they were

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[17] On this ultimatum and on Julian's journey see more recently Sinor 2002, with further references. Latin text in Dörrie 1956: 179.

'the son of Heaven' (*tianzi*) was not made by any Inner Asian ruler.[18]

With passing time, claim of divine legitimation to world-conquest becomes muted or disappears altogether. The above-mentioned formula, *Möngke tenggeri-yin kücün-tür*, opens the letter dated 1289 sent by Ilkhan Arγun to Philippe le Bel with the addition of *qa'an-u su-tur*, thus reading 'by the strength of Eternal Heaven and the kaghan's good fortune.'[19] In this context the use of the formula does not imply any claim to the superiority of the sender. The virtue belongs here to the writer himself. The meaning, as I see it, is that the *qan* can write the letter, because God allows him to do so. In Öljeitü's letter to Philippe le Bel, written in 1305, there is less formality, it is more business-like: *Öljeitü sultan üge manu*, 'Sultan Öljeitü – my word.' It will be noted that Arabic *sultan* is used in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, and in Öljeitü's letter it is applied indistinctly to himself and the king of France in a claim here to universality (Mostaert and Cleaves 1962: 58). There is no claim to universal power by the Mamluk Sultans, either Baybars (1260-1277)[20] or Qalāwūn, in their numerous treaties with various Christian potentates. True, in the treaty signed in 1290 between Qalāwūn and King Alfonso III of Aragon, for instance, the first claimed to be '...the most exalted lord, the learned, the just, Sayf al-Dunya wa'al Din, the sultan of Islam and the Muslims, the sultan of the Egyptian lands and the Damascene territory and Aleppo, the sultan of the kings, the king of all the East, the sultan of the Nubians, the sultan of the Holy House [i.e. Jerusalem], the sultan of the High and August House in Mecca (may God exalt it) the sultan of Yemen and the Hijaz, the sultan of all the Arabs, the sultan of all Islam, the lord of the kings and the sultans...' (Holt 1995: 132). Yet, precisely, these specifications indicate that the claim to rule over peoples and lands is well specified.

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[18] See further discussion of this by Nicola Di Cosmo, in his article in this volume.

[19] Mostaert and Cleaves 1962: 16-22, with detailed discussion of the meaning of *su*, the Mongol equivalent of Turkic *qut*.

[20] On Baybars, see the article by Denise Aigle in this volume.

Confirmation

John of Plano Carpini states it clearly: '... if anyone puffed up by pride wishes to be the Emperor on his own authority, without an election by the princes, he shall be put to death without any mercy.'[21] The legitimation may be and most often is supranatural, but the confirmation is a human decision.[22] Let me now briefly examine some of the ceremonies that accompanied or followed the election, to wit the actions taken formally to induct the new ruler.

The investiture ceremony practiced in the sixth century among the Türks in Mongolia is described in the *Zhou shu* (Book of Zhou):

> Wenn ein neuer Herrscher gewählt wurde trugen ihn die hohen Würdenträger aus seiner nächsten Umgebung in einer Filzdecke und drehten ihn dann der Sonne folgend neunmal. Bei jeder Drehung verbeugten sich alle seiner Untertanen vor ihm. Nach den Drehungen (und Verbeugungen) halfen sie den Oberhäuptling aufs Pferd und liessen ihn reiten. Daraufhin würgten sie ihn mit einem seidenen Tuch, dass er gerade noch am Leben blieb. Dann lösten sie die Binde und fragten ihn hastig: 'Wieviele Jahre wirst du unser kaghan sein?' Da der Khagan benommen war, konnte er die Zeitdauer nicht deutlich sagen. Darauf schlossen sie aus den Worten, die er dabei (verworden) ausgestossen hate, auf seine Amtsdauer (Liu 1958: vol. 1, 8-9).

One would doubt the veracity of this description were it not corroborated by the description of a similar practice of investiture recorded for the distant Khazars in the tenth century by the Arab historian al-Istakhri:

> When they wish to appoint a Kaghan they bring him and throttle him with a piece of silk till he is nearly strangled. Then they say to him 'How long do you wish to reign?' He says 'So and so many years.' If he dies before then, well and

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[21] V.18, p. 264, of the Menestò edition. The translation is that of Dawson (ed.) 1966: 25.

[22] I dealt with some of the modalities of these elections in Sinor 1993.

good. If not, he is killed when he reaches the year in question (Dunlop 1954: 97).

It should here be noted that among the Khazars the position of the kaghan was purely ceremonial.

On June 13, 528, at the inauguration of the Tuoba emperor Xiu, seven men placed him on a black felt rug on which the new emperor, facing west, made obeisance to Heaven. The *Beishi* where this detail is recorded remarks that this was an ancient custom that the Tuoba had practiced prior to 494, when their capital was still in Dai (Boodberg 1939: 242). Attention should be paid to the role of the black felt, an important accessory to the investiture about which more will be said presently.

Not surprisingly, we have more information about the inauguration of the Mongol rulers. In 1246 the Franciscan Friar John of Plano Carpini in company of Fr. Benedict the Pole attended the festivities surrounding the inauguration of Güyük, and left a lengthy description thereof (chap. 9, 32-4). Unfortunately, the text reveals next to nothing about the ceremony itself.

This lacuna is filled to some extent by a description, based on hearsay, given by the Armenian prince Hayton (Bk. III, chap. 2) of the enthronement of Chinggis. His *La Flor des estoires de l'orient*, written in French in 1307, includes the following passage:

> ... the Tartars established a seat amongst them and extended a *piece of black felt* on the ground and had Chinggis sit on it. And the captains of the seven nations lifted him with the felt and placed him on the seat and called him khan. And in kneeling before him they honored him and paid him reverence as to their lord.[23]

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[23] Hayton 1906: 148. The English rendering is that of my friend and colleague, Emanuel J. Mickel. Years ago we planned to publish a commented English translation of *La Flor des estoires de l'orient*. Professor Mickel promptly completed his task of translation, while I woefully failed to complete mine, which would have consisted of the commentaries. Here, I publicly apologize for my lamentable behavior.

So far, Hayton's description is based on second-hand information and he allows himself to speculate on the reasons why the inauguration happened as it happened.

Concerning the ceremony which the Tatars rendered to their lord at that time, no one should be astonished. For perhaps they did not know any better way or did not have a more beautiful cloth on which to have their lord sit.

But, in the next sentences Hayton turns to the present:

> But one might well be amazed that they maintained their original ways after having conquered so many kingdoms and lands. When they wish to elect their lord, and I have been at an election of the emperor of the Tartars twice and have seen how all the Tatars assembled in a great field, *they have their lord sit on a black felt* and they place a rich seat in the midst. The great men and those of Chingis khan lineage came, lifted him up, and set him on the seat. Then they paid him homage and honored him as if he were their dear and natural lord. (Hayton 1906: 149)

Hayton thus claims to have witnessed the enthronement of a Mongol *qan* twice.

Of what we know of Hayton's life, it is perfectly conceivable that, as a child, he might have been present in 1246 at Güyük's enthronement mentioned by Carpini. This is not the place to examine what the second occasion could have been.

A description similar to that given by Hayton, but more detailed, appears in what remains of a report given by the Dominican Simon of St. Quentin, who in 1247 spent a couple of months in the camp of the Mongol general Baiju. The original of Simon's description was lost but large sections of it were incorporated in the *Speculum historiale* of his contemporary, another French Dominican, Vincent of Beauvais.[24] Let me just give here the gist of the fairly detailed description of the ceremony.

It starts with a probably formalized dialog between the *qan*-elect, already sitting on the throne, and the assembled lords. The latter ask the *qan*-elect to become their ruler and the *qan*

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[24] Bk. xxxii, chap.32; see Richard 1965: 90-2.

expresses his willingness to assume the charge, on condition that he is *assured of the lords' obedience*. This done, the *qan* apparently descends from the throne and takes his seat on a felt rug placed on the floor. Another formalized dialog then takes place, in which the lords warn the *qan*-elect that if he rules well, to him will belong all the glory and the riches of the world, but if his rule is nefarious, he will be miserable and poor to the extent that not even the felt rug on which he now sits will remain his own.

This much said, they place the *qan*-elect and his consort on the felt rug and then lift the two of them off the ground and proclaim their ruler. It should be noted that more than seven centuries had passed between the Tuoba and Mongol inaugurations. By the time the latter occurred, the very memory of the Tuoba had long since vanished, yet the symbolism of the seat of felt had endured. Empires, peoples fade away; symbols, symbolic acts abide. One of them appears to be the throne, which replaced the earlier felt rug.

Carpini describes the magnificent tent in which the ceremony of Güyük's enthronement was to take place, how the crowds gathered, how they stood facing south, how they moved forward 'saying prayers and genuflecting towards the south' (Dawson 1966: 63). After they had done this for a long while, 'they returned to the tent and placed Güyük on the imperial throne, and the leaders knelt to him in public and, after this all of the people knelt.' Carpini did not witness, and hence did not describe, the essential act, namely the 'placing on the throne' of the new Great Qan. It is as if à description of the inauguration of the president of the United States would omit any mention of what happens on the steps of the Capitol. The account given by the Friars John and Benedict prompted Pelliot to suggest that the festivities described by them were of a seasonal character and not necessarily linked with the enthronement (Pelliot 1973: 59). If Pelliot's idea is correct, as I think it is, we must conclude that Güyük's enthronement was on this occasion linked with the festivities, and that a propitious day had been chosen for the ceremony. This still leaves us with no information on what happened in the tent. One could even think that Carpini's use of the term 'enthronement,' literally 'put him on the imperial

seat,'[25] is a simple transference of western customs into the Mongol milieu, were it not that later on Carpini would actually see and describe in some detail the magnificent throne used by Güyük. Carpini does not say who, if anyone, actually put him on the throne.

There seems to be no other object involved in the inauguration. At the moment of his installation, the *qan* is not surrounded by any of the regalia customary elsewhere – be it in East Asia or in Europe. There is no mention of robes, crowns, or scepters, he is not anointed and the seating on the throne is not simultaneous with, but follows the decisive moment which transforms the individual into a ruler. There seems to be no traditional sign or obvious symbol to mark his status. The sword mentioned by Vincent of Beauvais may be viewed as a regalium or may just be – and I tend to look at it this way – an ad-hoc symbol of the military character of the khanship. First and foremost, the ruler is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

It should be noted that in the inauguration processes described above, the legitimation of the newly elected ruler is procedural. *The ruler-elect becomes an effective ruler through demanding and receiving assurance of complete obedience.* The source of legitimacy is the will of those men – lets call them the electoral college – who had chosen him as their leader. Quite literally, he becomes the ruler of those who had elected him. Unlike in China or in medieval Europe,[26] the acquisition of the right to rule was derived in its entirety from the will of the subjects-to-be. Supernatural qualifications of the ruler-to-be may induce such actions, but do not, per se, secure election.

In contrast to the ritual dialog between the German coronation order of the tenth century in which the prince must answer in the affirmative questions put to him, in the dialog described by Simon of St. Quentin it is the *qan*-elect who asks the questions and it is incumbent upon his future subjects to answer them in the affirmative (Kern 1970: 76). In contemporary

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[25] The text (IX, 423, Menestò 1989: 320), has *posuerunt Cuyuc in sede imperiali.*

[26] See the very relevant remarks by Kern 1970: 7.

republics, the president-elect takes the oath to the effect that he will serve the people who elected him. In the inauguration described by Simon of St. Quentin, the ruler's subjects-to-be swear obedience to him. The belief that the *qan*, like his western counterparts, was to rule by the will of God, *deo gratias*, or in Mongol, *tengri-yin kücün-dür*, 'by the strength of Heaven,' is supported by ample evidence but its expression does not seem to have been part of the inauguration.

Odd as it may seem, the political thinking behind the inauguration of the *qan* is comparable to that which governs the selection of the pope. Cardinals elect one of their equals and confer on him the awesome spiritual power of the pope. In the words of the Roman Catholic Code of Canon Law (Canon 332), 'The Roman Pontiff acquires full and supreme power in the Church when, [together with episcopal consecration] he has been lawfully elected and *has accepted the election*' (Canon 331). '...[B]y virtue of his office, he [the pope] has supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church...,' and (Canon 333) '...there is neither appeal nor recourse against a judgment or a decree of the Roman Pontiff.' The *qan*, as the pope, obtains his power by the instrument of his equals. But, once he has accepted the charge, his power becomes unrestricted.

The Limitation of Power

Papal power may or may not be unrestricted, but in medieval Inner Asia, claims to rule the world notwithstanding (some examples of such claims have been given above), whatever the power of the ruler may have been, the enforcement of his will was at best sporadic and obtained only within a small radius. Physical force was not monopolized in the hands of the ruler, whose military force was not better equipped than that which may have opposed him. It is likely that the rulers linked some elite troops to their person with special bonds like the *nökör* of the Mongol Empire,[27] a large body-guard as it were, or the *kesig*

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[27] *SHM*, Rachewiltz 2004: 257.

of the Chinggisids.[28] But these were never the principal builders of conquest. The pattern prevailing in sedentary civilizations, namely that the majority of the population is disarmed, did not hold in medieval Inner Asia. The armament in the possession of a potential contender was equal to that of the ruler. Victory was a function of leadership and numerical superiority at the right moment in the right place.

In principle one can assume that political power is accepted, that is to say: people obey, as long as it seems to satisfy at least the majority of the people governed and it is not outbidden by a competing power. The fall of the Türk empire in AD 774 was not the doing of foreign invaders. It came about through internal turmoil, in which besides the Uyghur, the Karluk and Basmil participated as well. The alliance that put an end to the Türk state was short-lived. Already in 744, the Uyghur and Karluk had banded together against the Basmil. Soon after, the Karluk, in their turn, had to submit to the Uyghur. The deposed kaghan of the Basmil belonged to the same Ashina clan that had ruled over the Türks.

In medieval Inner Asia, territorial sovereignty was an unknown concept. Monarchs ruled over peoples and not over lands of undefined borders, but their writ could be enforced only along narrow territorial bands; it could not be exerted over vast adjacent territories. It was not sustained by technical facilities such as, in modern times, railroads, wired or wireless communications. The final territorial conquest of the land that became the USA advanced along the rivers and followed the building of the railroads. Here again, the sole exception was the Mongol Empire with its postal system, the *Yam,* which allowed messages to travel with considerable speed. But, let us make no mistake, these postal routes crossed lands over which neither the Great Qan, nor perhaps anyone else, had any demonstrable authority.

When the population over which it rules is sedentary, the state authority has constant access to its subjects and powerful means to enforce its will. The situation is different when people

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[28] *SHM*, Rachewiltz 2004: 691. See also discussion of the *keshig* in Atwood 2007.

have no permanent settlements, or the means of escape. In the Cold War period, there was the saying going around that people who left a socialist country to find a new home elsewhere 'voted with their feet.' Today there is a world-wide migration of people moving from their country of origin to lands more prosperous, or at least safer. For a nomad, nothing was easier than to move beyond the power range of a central authority, whereas sedentary populations were, by definition, denied this opportunity. There is in my view a quite stunning confirmation of this in an argument made in the below-cited Mongol ultimatum received at the end of 1237 by King Béla IV of Hungary, enjoining him to deliver the fugitive Comans who had sought shelter in Hungary. I quote:

> ...I know – writes the sender – that you are a rich and powerful king, that you have many soldiers under your command and that you rule alone over a big kingdom. Therefore it may be difficult to submit yourself to me; however it would be better for you to submit yourself spontaneously to me. I have learned further that you keep under your protection the Comans, my servants. I thus enjoin you not to keep them with you, and for their sake have me as an enemy; because it is easier for them to escape than for you. For they, without homes and on continuous move may perhaps evade, but you, who live in houses and have forts and cities, how shall you escape from my hands?[29]

The sender is quite aware of the advantages inherent to the lifestyle of the pastoral nomads, and the limitations of his own power over evasive populations seeking and finding refuge beyond the constraints of imposed statehood. The power of the ruler extended only to those willing to obey. To the adventurers or the desperate, escape was a constant option, and he who abused his power may have found no one to obey.

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[29] For the Latin text, see Dörrie 1956: 179.

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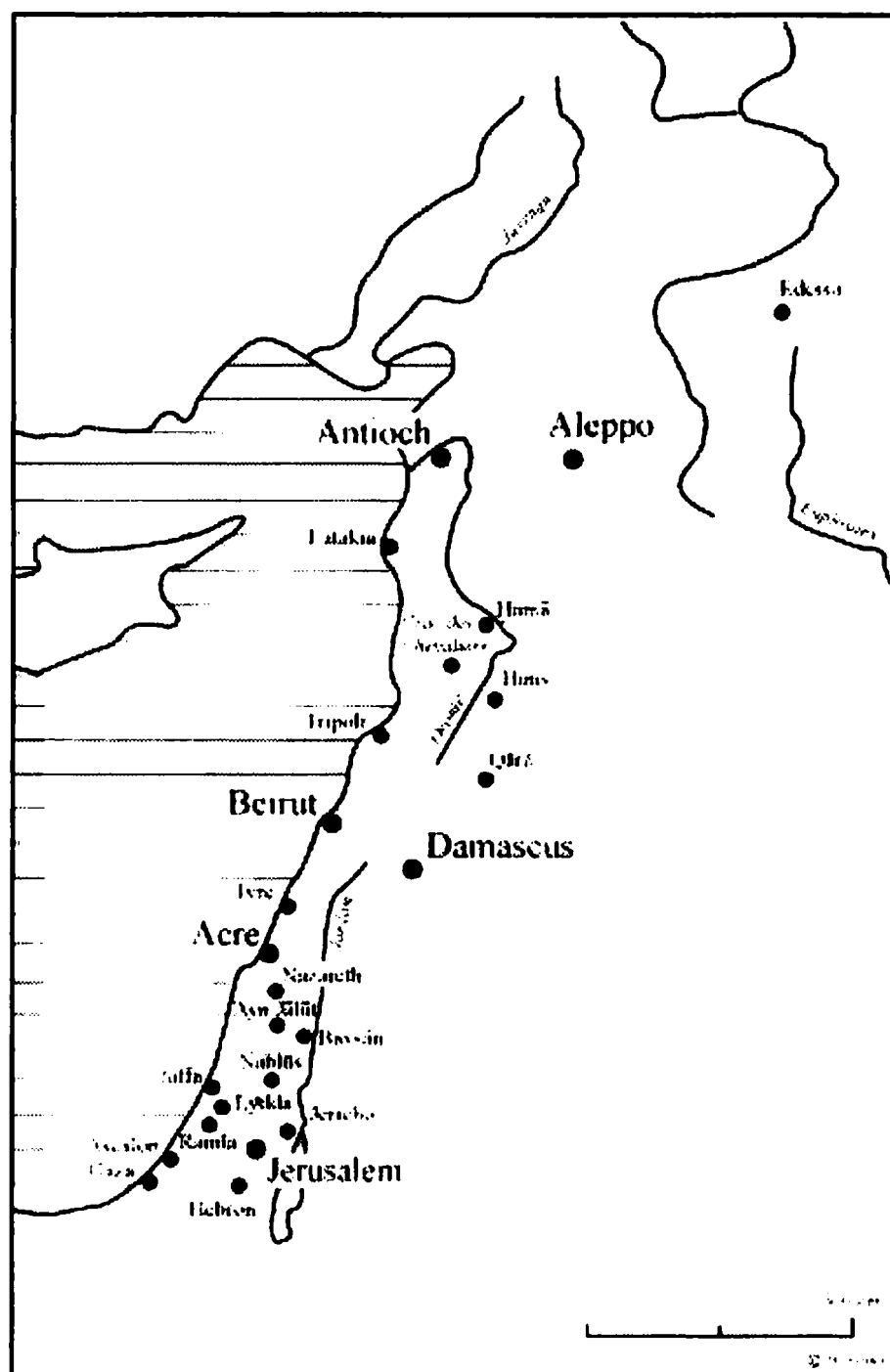
Places names in Syria-Palestine at the time of Baybars

Chapter 2

Legitimizing A Low-Born, Regicide Monarch: The Case Of The Mamluk Sultan Baybars And The Ilkhans In The Thirteenth Century[*]

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Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Syria-Palestine[1] and Egypt were the scene of a number of political upheavals, most memorably the arrival of the Crusaders who seized Jerusalem, the second-holiest city of Islam, in 1099. That event traumatized the Muslim community. In 1187 Saladin, the famous Ayyubid ruler, who became a paragon of chivalry in the West,[2] recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders and, in Muslim eyes, restored the honour of Islam. The Ayyubid dynasty started a long tradition of enlisting into its armies great numbers of Turkish military slaves, the Mamluks (*mamlūk*),[3] from Dasht-i Qipčaq. These Turks were nomads of the steppes north of the Black Sea.[4] The Ayyubids had ample opportunity to acquire them as slaves,

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[*] In this paper, I use the transliteration in general usage for Arabic in English.

[1] In the medieval sources, this region is referred to as Bilād al-Shām. It was composed of Syria, Palestine, and two regions: Jordan and Mount Lebanon. Facing this page, see a map with geographic names in Syria-Palestine at the time of Baybars.

[2] See Jubb 2000.

[3] The Arabic term *mamlūk* literally means 'something owned,' and thence 'slave,' especially in the sense of a military slave bought by a sultan or amir in order to form an army. This practice had been introduced on a much smaller scale by the Abbasid caliphs. The military slaves were generally of Central Asian origin. For a general overview of Mamluks in Islam, see Amitai 2006: 40-78.

[4] In the West, the Qipčaq Turks were known as Cumans. See Hazai 1986: 125-6.

as children were sold at a very low price (Amitai 2006: 55). The Mamluks, also known as Baḥriyya,[5] were then enlisted into the personal guards (*ḥalqa*) of the Ayyubid rulers. After Saladin's death in 1193, his states were divided among his brother and his sons. Dissension within the Ayyubid family weakened their power and contributed to the emergence of the Mamluk sultanate and the rise to power of the future Sultan Baybars, 'Lord Tiger.'[6] The aim of this article is to trace Baybars' extraordinary fate. Acquired by a slave merchant on the Qipčaq steppes, he was first purchased as a slave soldier by the amir Rukn al-Dīn al-Bunduqdārī, then bought from him by the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb (r. 1240-1249), who made him a member of his personal guard. Baybars eventually gained the sultanate himself in 1260. This remarkable feat made a great impact, and Baybars subsequently became a hero of Arabic popular literature.[7]

Introduction: Baybars' Path to Power

The Baḥriyya Mamluks supplanted the Ayyubids in Egypt and in Syria-Palestine thanks to two major military crises in which Baybars played a leading role. His first deed of arms took place during the Egyptian crusade of Louis XI, later to become St. Louis, in 1249-1250. Baybars commanded the Ayyubid army alongside his master on the battlefield of Manṣūra in Egypt in 1250, where the Muslim troops were victorious although the Ayyubid sultan died 'a martyr.'[8] The dead sultan's son, al-Malik

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[5] The *baḥriyya* Mamluks were trained in barracks located on an island in the Nile (*al-baḥr*), hence their name.

[6] On the Ayyubids, see Cahen 1991: 820-30.

[7] On the 'Baybars's Roman (*sīrat Baybars*)' in the Arabic popular literature, see Paret 1960: 1160-1; and Garcin 2003, which as well as studies includes an ample bibliography and references to the editions and translation of the original texts. The 'Romance of Baybars' is recited to this day in certain *cafés* in the old city of Damascus, where his tomb is located.

[8] See a few details on this battle in Wiet 1991: 1158-60.

al-Mu'azzam Tūrān-Shāh, then ascended the Egyptian throne. But, with the murder of al-Malik al-Mu'azzam Tūrān-Shāh, his master's legitimate successor, Baybars put an end to the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt. His secretary and official biographer, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, justified the assassination as realizing God's will (*qadar*).[9]

A decade later, Syria-Palestine was in turn attacked, but this time by invaders from the east led by Hülegü, founder of the Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty in Iran. Having conquered Baghdad on 13 February 1258, bringing the 'Abbasid caliphate to an end, Hülegü (d. 8 February 1265) launched his campaign against northern Syria in late 1259. After a long siege of Aleppo, he captured the city on 18 January 1260; immediately afterwards, his general-in-chief Kitbugha took Damascus. The Mongol troops penetrated as far as Palestine, where their advance was halted. Once again, Baybars stood out for his feats of arms at the side of the sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar Qutuz during the victory of the Mamluk troops over the Mongols at 'Ayn Jālūt on 3 September 1260.[10] It must be said, however, that the Mamluk historians attached far too much importance to this victory. Hülegü had been obliged to return to Mongolia following the death of the great khan Möngke in August 1259, leaving Kitbugha in the region to command a military detachment of only a few thousand horsemen. They were crushed without much difficulty by the Mamluk troops, who numbered 120,000.[11] Then, after the victory of 'Ayn Jālūt, the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Muzaffar Qutuz was in turn assassinated. The affair is reported as follows: 'The sultan [Baybars] went to the hunt with him [Qutuz] [...] then he struck him with his sword. His death was the accomplishment of God's decree (*qadar*)' (Ibn 'Abd al-

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[9] Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir: 50. Fragments of a translation of this biography are to be found in Sublet 1992: 24-54. On the term *qadar*, very important in Islamic theology, see Gardet 1978: 280-3.

[10] On this battle, see Amitai 1992: 119-50.

[11] The sources give varying estimates of the forces present, but agree that the Mongol fighters were outnumbered. See Amitai 1992: 123-9.

Ẓāhir: 68). As we may observe, these two regicides posed a problem for Baybars; his biographer invokes a divine decree to justify both cases.

On becoming sultan, Baybars took the regnal name al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars Ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥī al-Bunduqdārī (r. 1260-1277). Two important elements of this name demand attention. The first is 'Ibn 'Abd Allāh (son of God's slave),' which constitutes a fictive lineage intended to make up for the lack of ancestry resulting from his servile origins and lack of any known family.[12] The second element is the 'relative adjective (*nisba*)'[13] al-Ṣāliḥī, derived from the name of his former master, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, which he claimed in an attempt to wipe out the memory of the murder of the master's son and successor, al-Malik al-Mu'aẓẓam Tūrān-Shāh. He was thus able to locate his own reign within the continuity of the Ayyubid dynasty he had ended in Egypt.

In fact, this memorable victory marked the beginning of a new chapter in Baybars' political career. But just as he was acquiring prominence on the political stage, a new ideology had appeared within the Islamic world, whose demands he could not meet as a mere Mamluk. The successors of Chinggis Khan, in their diplomatic correspondence with the Latin West and the Mamluk sultans, asserted the claims of the 'imperial good fortune' or 'charismatic fortune (*suu*)' that the 'Eternal Heaven (*möngke tenggeri*)' had granted to the Khans of Chinggis' line.[14]

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[12] On these fictitious lineages, see Sublet 1991: 30.

[13] The *nisba*, or 'relative adjective,' is one of the elements that make up medieval Arabic personal names. Its function is to express an individual's relationship with a person, group, or place, see Sublet 1995: 55-7.

[14] According to Rachewiltz (1973: 21-36), this concept was known to the Chinese, with whom the Mongols had long been in contact. Golden (1981: 37-76), however, considers that the parallels with the Turks are more relevant. On this ideology in diplomatic correspondences, see Voegelin 1940-1941: 378-413; Richard 1973: 212-22; Amitai-Preiss

All nations of the earth were invited to 'be in peace (*el*) and harmony with the Mongols,' or in other words to accept a state of total and unconditional submission (Amitai-Preiss 1999: 62). A sovereign who refused to submit was considered a rebel (*bulgha*) against not only the Mongol Khans but also against the 'Eternal Heaven.' In 1269 Abagha (r. 1265-1282), Hülegü's successor and the great-grandson of Chinggis Khan, sent a messenger to say to Baybars: 'The best thing you can do is to make peace with us [...]. You are a slave bought at Sīwās; how can you set yourself up against the kings of the earth?' (Amitai-Preiss 1995: 121; Broadbridge 2001: 107). Abagha, a ruler of imperial blood with the mandate of the 'Eternal Heaven,' could not but express his scorn for a rebel of no ancestry. Baybars, having been bought as a slave, could not counter this Mongol claim of lineage (*nasab*)[15] in kind. Moreover, he had come to power after committing regicide twice over.

How to wipe clean these blemishes?
Baybars presented himself as protector of the true faith against the crusades and the Mongol dynasty of Iran, denounced in Syria-Palestine as pagan and tyrannical. Like all the Mamluks, however, he had little acquaintance with Islamic culture, and was advised on these matters by a shaykh who appears as his 'spiritual director,' one al-Khaḍir (the Green). All the biographers of the shaykh in question attest that he barely ever left the sultan's side and held great sway over him. The sultan made him privy to his most secret plans, never excluded him from his councils, and took him along with him on all his military expeditions (Pouzet 1978: 176).[16] Baybars' 'spiritual

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1994: 11-13; *idem* 1999: 57-92; Aigle 2004: 982-5; Aigle 2005: 143-62.

[15] In Arabic, *nasab* means 'lineage, ancestry, genealogy'. See Rosenthal 1993: 967-9.

[16] I am grateful to Anne-Marie Eddé for directing my attention to this reference. The name of this shaykh was: al-Khaḍir b. Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī (d. 11 June 1277).

director' was, however, a controversial figure among his contemporaries. In April-May 1271, returning from his victory over the Crusaders at Crac des Chevaliers, Baybars, upon the urging of the shaykh, ordered the pillaging of the great synagogue of Damascus and had the Torah and all the furnishings burned (Pouzet 1978: 178; *idem* 1986: 335). The chroniclers attest that he also persecuted the Christians, ordering the pillaging of several churches (Pouzet 1978: 178). It may be that he was the instigator of certain acts of violence that Baybars carried out against Christian communities and Muslim sects that were considered heretical. The Mamluk sultan thus constructed his political legitimacy on an Islamic basis. That legitimacy is echoed in the narrative historical sources, particularly his royal biographies, in his monumental epigraphy, and in the apocalyptic literature.

I have chosen to analyse three important elements in this study of Baybars' construction of an Islamic legitimacy: the restoration of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, the use of the Qur'anic symbolism attaching to certain sites in Syria-Palestine, and, finally, presentation of Sultan Baybars as the 'eschatological last emperor.'

The Restoration of the Caliphate in Cairo

Baybars' first gesture, shortly after he came to power, was to restore the caliphate in Cairo, receiving a member of the Abbasid family who had escaped from the Baghdad massacre. The survivor's family tree was confirmed by the chief *qāḍī* of Cairo, and in June 1261 he was invested as caliph with the regnal name of al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh. Baybars then sent him to reconquer Baghdad at the head of a small army. The sultan was in fact afraid that the new caliph might succeed in seizing the former Abbasid capital, and thereby take from Baybars the prestige he hoped to have for himself due to his restoration of the caliphate in Cairo.[17] His fear was unfounded. In November 1261, the

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[17] So we can understand from the account of Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir's nephew, Shāfi' 'Alī, the author of another biography of the sultan but

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Ilkhanid armies easily crushed the Muslim detachment in the environs of Baghdad (Amitai 1995: 58).

The caliphate very soon came to be used as an instrument in Baybars' hands. Berke Khan, the Mongol sovereign of the Golden Horde who had converted to Islam,[18] sent a delegation of Mongols to the sultan (Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 142), which arrived in Cairo on 9 November 1262. The matter under discussion was an alliance of Baybars and Berke Khan against their mutual enemy, the Ilkhans. Baybars took the opportunity to enthrone a new caliph, with the name al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh (r. 1261-1302), a week later, in the presence of the Mongol envoys. As with the previous caliph, scholars in the religious sciences confirmed the lineage of the new pretender. This new caliph charged Baybars with the responsibility of protecting the Muslim territories, invited him to make the pilgrimage and named him his 'associate in supporting the true religion (*qasīm fī qiyyām bi-l-ḥaqq*)' (Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 142). He then delivered two sermons dwelling on the themes of the leadership of the community – *imāma*[19] – and holy war – *jihād* (Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 143).[20] Immediately thereafter, the caliph was stripped of all power and shut up in the Cairo citadel.

Baybars now sent a letter to Berke Khan with the Mongol delegation, accompanied by a copy of the caliph's genealogical tree. Symbolically appropriating for himself the caliph's illustrious Abbasid lineage, Baybars thus exhibited to

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one which takes a more neutral approach to his actions. He points out the question of why Baybars, although conscious of the Mongols' power: 'would have sent such a pitiful force.' See Amitai-Preiss 1995: 59.

[18] The conversion to Islam of Berke Khan, the grandson of Chinggis Khan, is presented with an accompanying garland of legends. See Richard 1967: 173-84.

[19] On the *imāma*, see Madelung 1990: 1192-8.

[20] On the restoration of the caliphate in Cairo, see Thorau 1987: 131-41; and a more detailed account in Heidemann 1994. See also Amitai-Preiss 1995: 56-62; Broadbridge 2001: 96; Aigle 2008.

the Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde, a sovereign of imperial blood, the ancestry that he personally lacked. Furthermore, the Mamluk sultan thus made himself appear in his dealings with Berke Khan as the genuine leader of the Muslim community, the *umma*. He had enthroned the caliph only to give Islamic legitimacy to his own power. The immediate and tangible result of the restoration of the caliphate in Cairo was to permit Baybars to exercise suzerainty, albeit one that was more symbolic than real, over the holy cities of Islam. He had Berke Khan's name pronounced after his own in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.[21] Thus, while making evident his esteem for the Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde, Baybars showed that his authority extended to the holy cities of Islam, thus reaffirming his claim to be leader of the Muslim community.

Baybars' inscriptions in the Near East, with the exception of the mosque of Qārā,[22] all publicize the relationship between the caliph and the sultan. Baybars wanted to proclaim to the Muslim community at large that he was the 'refounder' of the caliphate that had been destroyed by the infidel Mongols. The first occurrence of the title 'associate of the caliph (*qasīm amīr al-mu'minīn*)' appears on the citadel of Damascus immediately after the investiture of the first caliph. The title 'reviver of the glorified caliphate (*muḥyī al-khilāfa al-mu'aẓẓama*),' situated on the citadel of Karak, should also be read as a reference to Baybars' restoration of the caliphate (RCÉA n° 4733). In Egypt, the seat of the sultan's power, the title 'associate of the caliph' appears in all the surviving inscriptions, but these are far fewer than in Syria-Palestine.

A title peculiar to Baybars, 'he who ordered the oath of allegiance sworn to two caliphs (*al-āmir bi-bay'at al-*

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[21] Berke Khan's name was first pronounced at the Friday prayer in Cairo in July 1263, when the envoys of the khan of the Golden Horde were in the Mamluk capital. See Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 174.

[22] Qārā was a little town on the road from Ḥimṣ to Damascus, with an entirely Christian population. The inscription is engraved on a former church which Baybars had turned into a mosque.

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khalīfatayn),' expresses how the sultan positioned his power in relation to the caliph's. The first occurrence of this title is on Baybars' great mosque in Cairo, founded after the capture of Ṣafad and his latest victory over the Crusaders on 20 July 1266 (*RCÉA* n° 4638). The title indicates that the two caliphs were under an obligation to him. Before the fall of the caliphate of Baghdad, sultans were 'the caliphate's approved (*raḍī l-khilāfa*),' a title which only emphasized the close cooperation between the two powers. Baybars, a regicide usurper and former Mamluk of no ancestry, took pride in having ensured the recognition of two caliphs who had what he sorely lacked: a noble lineage. The title gave Baybars, who was Islamicized but had not himself chosen to convert, religious legitimacy in wielding power. It further expresses the supremacy of the sultan's power compared to that of the caliph.

The Use of Qur'anic Symbolism
The site of 'Ayn Jālūt, testament of Baybars' victory

As soon as he had taken power, Baybars ordered the construction of a monument, the 'Testament of Victory (*Mashhad al-naṣr*),'[23] to commemorate the great deeds of the Mamluks at 'Ayn Jālūt (Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 91). Though its importance was exaggerated, the victory had caused great stir in Syria-Palestine. Proceeding a step further, Baybars turned to his advantage the religious symbolism associated with the site of 'Ayn Jālūt, which is mentioned by the Arab geographers as a village located between Baysān and Nablūs in Palestine.[24] It was claimed that this was the place where David killed Goliath. In the Qur'an, David and Goliath appear as Ṭālūt and Jālūt. Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir, Baybars' secretary and official biographer, linking the site of 'Ayn Jālūt to the Qur'anic tradition wrote that: 'God gave Baybars victory

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[23] The term *mashhad* means, inter alia, 'being a witness to.' It can be used for a holy place, the tomb of a prophet or saint, and so forth. See Bosworth 1991: 702.

[24] 'Ayn Jālūt is located north-west of Mount Gilboa, 50km to the north-west of Baysān. On this site, see Lewis 1991: 810-11.

over the Tatars at this place because it is the holy place where Ṭālūt and Jālūt confronted each other and where the enemies' blood was spilled' (Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir: 91-2).

In the Qur'an, Ṭālūt confronts Jālūt and his infidel people with a small army. At the moment of parting with his troops, Ṭālūt says: 'God will try you with a river; whosoever drinks of it is not of me, and whoso tastes it not, he is of me, saving him who scoops up with hand. But they drank of it, except a few of them' (Qur'an 2: 249). With that small number of men, Ṭālūt gained victory. The Biblical model of this Qur'anic account is the battle Gideon fought to deliver the Israelites from Midian and his people. Gideon had his men go down to the water's edge, and God said to him: 'There are still too many men. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there [...] You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink. Three hundred men lapped water with their hands to their mouth. All the rest of men knelt down to drink water. With the 300 men who lapped water I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand' (Judges 7: 4-7). Facing an army of men 'as many as the locusts,' Gideon crushed the enemy with only the three hundred men who had overcome the divine test. As a result of his resounding victory, the Midianites disappeared from history.

The site of 'Ayn Jālūt, thus identified with a Biblical-Qur'anic war against the pagans, placed Baybars in a line of leaders aided by God in their struggles against impious peoples. Baybars thus, from the beginning of his reign, presented himself as the heroic saviour who had delivered the Muslims from the danger to Islam that the 'infidel' Mongols represented. As we will see later, this same role of saviour is to be seen in certain inscriptions that he left in Syria-Palestine and in the Islamic apocalyptic literature.

The location of Moses' tomb and its Qur'anic resonance
Baybars' first political acts are troubling: Islamicized, he was raised as a Mamluk, freed, and then turned regicide to gain

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power. He later sought to erase memory of these things and enhance his image as a pious Muslim through activities in the service of Islam and tokens of his personal piety. In 1269 he went to Mecca for the pilgrimage (*al-ḥājj*), one of the five pillars of Islam, which every Muslim who is physically able must perform once in his lifetime. He then went to Jerusalem, where he decided to found a religious complex on the site of the tomb of Moses.[25] Of the royal biographies of Baybars, only Ibn Shaddād gives an account of this building, in the chapter in which he cites the buildings renovated by the sultan in Noble Jerusalem (*al-Quds al-sharīf*). He writes: 'And he built, over the tomb of Moses (*qabr Mūsā*) which lies near the red hill (*al-kathīb al-aḥmar*)[26] [...], a dome (*qubbaṭ^{an}*) and a mosque (*masjid^{an}*). He provided [the tomb of Moses] with an inalienable pious foundation (*waqf*) to meet the needs of its muezzin and imam, those who lived in its vicinity and those who made pious visits to it' (Ibn Shaddād: 351). It is most surprising that Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir, who never misses an opportunity to eulogize his master's virtues, does not report the sultan's reasons for ordering the construction of this building, which was for him highly symbolic.[27]

The choice was in fact dictated by the place's Qur'anic resonance. It is mentioned in the Qur'an: 'And we gave Moses the Book, that haply would be guided, and We made Mary's son, and his mother, to be a sign, and gave them refuge upon a height, where was a hollow and a spring' (Qur'an 23: 49-50). According

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[25] According to Amitai (2005: 49), Baybars probably took this decision when passing by the site on his way to Jerusalem. It may be that the instigator of the initiative was Shaykh al-Khaḍir. I do not consider it likely that Baybars had the religious knowledge needed to appreciate the site's Qur'anic connection.

[26] Literally, *kathīb* means 'sandhill.'

[27] Amitai 2005: 49. See other's bibliographic elements on *Maqām* Nabī Mūsā in Meri 2002: 259, note 44.

to the commentators, the hill in question (*al-rabwa*)[28] is the Red Hill mentioned in the hadith collections. The Prophet reportedly said: 'I passed close by [the tomb of] Moses on the night that God made me travel close to the Red Hill. He was standing up praying in his tomb' (Muslim 4: 1845). Islamic tradition places this hill on the road between Jerusalem and the Jordan. A spot not far from here, which came to be known as *Maqām* Nabī Mūsā, was designated by Baybars as the site of the tomb of Moses.[29] The inscription he placed there, relatively low down, is highly visible to all those who arrive at this place on pilgrimage (Amitai 2005: 51). It begins with a verse of the Qur'an: 'The inhabiting of the Holy Mosque as the same as one who believes in God and the Last Day' (Qur'an 9: 18). The inscription then makes a direct reference to Baybars' pilgrimage: 'The establishment of this tomb (*maqām*)[30] was ordered by our Master [...] on his return from the pilgrimage (*al-ḥājj*) when he went to visit Noble Jerusalem' (*RCÉA* n° 4612). In this, Baybars was informing subjects on a pious visit (*al-ziyāra*) to the tomb of Moses that he had accomplished the pilgrimage to the two holy cities of Islam. It was also important for him to locate the tomb of Moses near Jerusalem,[31] in a region where there lay numerous Christian monasteries.[32] Here we see an effort to impose a new

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[28] On *rabwa*, see al-Harawī: 25-6. Certain commentators on the Qur'an place this hill near Ramla.

[29] Al-Harawī (45) places Moses' tomb near the village of Jericho. Amitai (2005:45) states that his tomb lies 1.5km south of the Jerusalem-Jericho road and 8km south-west of Jericho. On the inscriptions carved on this tomb, see Mayer 1932: 27-32; Amitai 2005: 45-53.

[30] The term *maqām*, used for the tomb (*qabr*) of a saint or a prophet, literally means 'place.' Numerous equivalents for this term can be found, varying according to place and period. See Mayeur-Jaouen 2000: 150-1.

[31] On Jerusalem's sacrality in early Islam, see Sadan 1993: 231-45.

[32] It seems, judging from the *waqf* document of *al-Nabī Mūsā*, that most of the properties turned into pious foundations had been taken from the Latin churches and the monasteries. See Frenkel 2001: 161.

religious topography upon and Islamicize a region that still retained a marked Christian presence.

Baybars, the 'New Alexander' and 'Eschatological Last Emperor'

In three inscriptions, Baybars is styled the 'Alexander of the age (*Iskandar al-zamān*)' (*RCÉA* nos. 4554, 4557 and 4612). This title was used by a number of conquerors in Greek and Roman Antiquity. They sought, by adopting it, to place themselves in the lineage of the Macedonian sovereign and lay claim to the heritage of a charismatic and universal monarchy.[33] In the Muslim world, identification with Alexander appears in the form 'Alexander of the age (*Iskandar al-zamān*)' or 'Second Alexander (*Iskandar al-thānī*).' These appellations were used by, among others, the rulers of Kh^wārazm, the Khwarazmshahs, and the Saljuq Turkish sultans. They are, however, relatively rare before the thirteenth century, coming into common use only under the Mongols of Persia (Polignac 2000: 76). Alexander, although conqueror of the first great Persian empire, that of the Achaemenids, figures in Persian historiography as a Persian ruler. He later served as a model for integrating conquerors from the steppes into Persian history.[34]

Baybars was the first Mamluk ruler to adopt this title. He did so exclusively in Syria-Palestine, and confined its use to the inscriptions carved on three religious monuments there: at Qārā, on the church that he had turned into a mosque in September 1266, after putting the town's Christian population to the sword; on the mausoleum of Khālid b. al-Walīd[35] in Ḥimṣ, also in

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[33] The bibliography on Alexander is very plentiful. See Bridges and Bürgel 1996; Harf-Lancner, Kappler and Suard 1999; Aigle 2000a; and the numerous researches of F. de Polignac.

[34] In Persia, on the integration of Alexander in the *Shāh-nāma* (Book of the kings), and subsequently uses, see Mélikian-Chirvani 1997: 135-77; *idem* 1998: 7-47.

[35] The latter is considered by Islamic tradition to have been one of the conquerors of Syria-Palestine. For Baybars, restoring his mausoleum

September 1266; and finally on the tomb of Moses, the building of which he ordered, as we have seen, in 1269 on his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca. Baybars attached great symbolic importance to these religious foundations. The inscriptions were carved following large-scale military operations carried out between 1266 and 1267-8,[36] when the influence of his 'spiritual director,' Shaykh al-Khaḍir, was at its height, a point which merits some comment.

In Islam, the exegetes identify Alexander with 'the man with two horns' or the 'Two-horned One' of the Qur'an, the 'Dhū l-qarnayn' of Sura 18. 83-97. The episode that recounts the exploits of the 'man with two horns' is preceded in the same Sura (18. 59-81) by the story of the journey of Moses and his servant (*fatā*) in search of the 'meeting of the two seas (*majma'a l-bahrayn*)' (Qur'an 18: 60). Most of the commentators on Islam's holy book refer to Moses' companion by the name al-Khaḍir (the Green), and associate the journey of Moses and his companion with Alexander's journey in search of the source of life.[37] Making Baybars a 'New Alexander' therefore implied making his faithful 'spiritual director,' who was also called 'the Green,' a 'New al-Khaḍir.' It is entirely possible that the latter was the inspiration for these inscriptions that glorified him as much as they did Baybars.

The Qur'anic man with two horns is considered by the exegetes to have been a believer (*muslim*). He foretold God's punishments upon the wicked and His rewards for the good. He went from one end of the earth, where the sun sets, to the other where it rises, and then reached a place situated between 'two barriers (*bayna l-saddatayn*)'[38] (Qur'an 18: 93). There he found

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allowed him to present himself as part of a 'line' – the line of valorous men who had brought glory to Islam in its early years in the region.

[36] On Baybars' campaigns in Syria-Palestine, see Thorau 1987: 187-258.

[37] On al-Khaḍir in the Qur'an and exegetic traditions, see Wensik 1978: 935-7.

[38] In others words between 'two mountains.'

a people that understood no language, in other words a savage people, known as Yājūj and Mājūj. God charged him with the mission of building between these two tall mountains a gigantic wall, made of steel and iron, to prevent these savage peoples from 'doing corruption in the earth' (Qur'an 18: 94). Here we have the Qur'anic version of Gog and Magog, the peoples of Biblical eschatology (Ezekiel 38-9; Revelation 20: 7-10).

In Baybars' inscriptions, the reference to Alexander refers to the Two-horned One of the Qur'an. The eschatological dimension of Yājūj and Mājūj is directly linked to their being shut up behind the barrier that Alexander/the Two-horned One built. The bursting forth of the Mongols had led to eschatological worries in the Muslim empire. The peoples of Yājūj and Mājūj (the Gog and Magog of Biblical tradition) clearly represent the nomads of Inner Asia. The identification of the Turks, and later the Mongols, with Yājūj and Mājūj rests on a historical foundation: the peoples mentioned in Ezekiel, the description of whom appears to be an echo of the Cimmerians' invasion of Anatolia at the end of the eighth century BC. The arrival, on God's order, of these peoples of the Biblical and Qur'anic eschatology could be seen as foretelling the end of time.[39] In this context, Baybars appears as the 'New Alexander' of the Qur'an, having halted the Mongol surge into Syria-Palestine. The Mamluk sultan did not, however, see fit to have this title carved on a fortress or on the citadel of Damascus.[40] He probably wished to reserve the eschatological impact of the figure of Alexander for the three religious monuments he founded after his victories over the enemies of Islam and his completion of the pilgrimage to the two holy cities, Mecca and Jerusalem.

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[39] On Gog and Magog and Alexander's barrier, see Anderson 1932; Donzel and Ott 2005: 251-4; Bacqué-Grammont, Polignac and Bohas 2000: 109-27; Aigle 2000b: 62-4.

[40] The title was adopted by al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 1290-1293) in an inscription on the citadel of Alep; see Polignac 2000: 73-87.

Baybars as the 'last emperor' in the apocalyptic literature

Baybars' eschatological role as 'Alexander of the age,' taken up by him in his inscriptions, is also to be found in the Islamic apocalyptic literature. 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Nafīs (1210-1288), an Egyptian scholar who was probably the sultan's physician, was the author of a treatise entitled *al-Kāmil's Epistle on the Life of the Prophet*,[41] in which a hero who prophecies the calamities that the Islamic community will have to endure for its sins is a certain al-Kāmil. This text includes historical information on Baybars' reign and his character and physical features (Ibn al-Nafīs: 41-8). Ibn al-Nafīs' treatise, describing historical events in a tragic mode, was undoubtedly influenced by the Christian apocalyptic literature, as we see in his description of the deterioration of religious life, the threats of destruction from outside and the eschatological events that are to precede the end of time. Also appearing prominently is the theme of the 'last emperor,' the victorious sovereign who must save the religious community. It is well known that many of the elements found in the historical Christian apocalypses – which circulated, not only as written *corpus*, but also orally through the motifs used in sermons – were incorporated into the Islamic *corpus* (Abel 1954: 37).[42] The concept of the 'last emperor' was widespread in Coptic circles, that is, among Christians in Egypt.

The origin of the eschatological last emperor is to be found in the Apocalypse of the Pseudo-Methodius, a work composed in the seventh century in the context of the Arab invasions of Syria-Palestine.[43] Elements of this text were

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[41] The text edited by Meyerhof and Schacht is accompanied by a greatly abridged English translation. See Ibn al-Nafīs' biography: 10-22. *Risālat al-kāmiliyya fī sīrat al-nabawiyya* must have been written before 1274, the date of the oldest preserved manuscript: see Kruk 1995: 324, note 5.

[42] See a survey of Christian apocalyptic literature in Graf 1944, 1: 273-97.

[43] In the Middle Ages, the theme of the last emperor came to be replaced in the religious climate created by the Muslim capture of Edessa in 1144. The subsequent period was marked by the growing

undoubtedly circulating in Arabic at the time Ibn al-Nafīs composed his treatise, in the second half of the thirteenth century (Kruk 1955: 329). A detailed examination of Graf's (1944, 1: 173-97) description of the Christian apocalyptic texts of the Islamic period shows that they present many similarities to this treatise of Ibn al-Nafīs.

In these texts, we generally find the theme of the last emperor charged by God with cleansing the religious community of its sins. In his derivative work, Ibn al-Nafīs closely follows this schema, presenting a summary of historical events, then describing the deterioration of religious life. The Prophet of Islam, for example, encouraged marriage for the sake of producing numerous descendants. But Ibn al-Nafīs (34, Arabic text; 61, English translation) observes that at the time when he is composing his text there is a proliferation of sins: homosexuality (*al-liwāṭ*), fornication (*al-zinā'*), etc. Here we find this type of literature being used for ascetic purposes. As in every apocalyptic text, whether Islamic or Christian, he evokes the destruction of the Muslim community by an external threat, in this case the Mongols, although they are not mentioned by name. Ibn al-Nafīs writes: 'The infidels (*al-kuffār*) cannot belong to any religious community (*dhū milla*) because their success would be considered the success of their religion' (Ibn al-Nafīs: 41). They 'live in an inhabited world' very far from the temperate zone. They must come from northern climes (*min al-aṭrāf al-shamāliyya*), because the peoples of those regions are courageous and hard-hearted (Ibn al-Nafīs: 42). Al-Kāmil, the hero of Ibn al-Nafīs' treatise, prophesies that the infidels will not be able to seize all the Muslim lands because, were that to happen, the immediate consequence would be the destruction of Islam. The infidels would occupy only the regions where the aforementioned sins were numerous, in other words Syria-Palestine (Ibn al-Nafīs: 43).

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importance of the ideal of poverty preached by the Franciscans and by the apocalyptic theories of Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1132-1202). See Reeves 1961: 323-70; Daniel 1968: 671-6; *idem* 1969: 127-54.

Without naming him, Ibn al-Nafīs presents Baybars as the victorious sovereign, predestined by God to save the Muslim community. As the latter had not respected the instructions of God's messenger (*rasūl Allāh*), divine punishment had appeared in the form of the infidel attacks. The purpose of the text is to exhort the population of Syria-Palestine to accept the power of Sultan Baybars. The religious community, according to Ibn al-Nafīs, can only be saved if two essential conditions are fulfilled: the sultan must have a numerous army (*jaysh kathīr*) and he must be courageous (Ibn al-Nafīs: 45). The victorious sultan must be cruel and merciless (Ibn al-Nafīs: 44). Before combating the infidels (*qabl mujāwzat al-kuffār*), he must seize the property of the country's inhabitants (*amwāl ahl al-bilād*). This is presented by Ibn al-Nafīs as an inescapable necessity for the well-being of the Muslim community which will thus be cleansed of its sins (Ibn al-Nafīs: 44).[44]

The population will then fall into a state of extreme poverty leading to an increase in murder and other crimes in the country (Ibn al-Nafīs: 44). The victorious sultan must then order exemplary punishments (*al-'uqūbāt*): cutting off members (*qaṭa'a al-aṭrāf*), crucifying (*al-ṣalb*), nailing (*al-tasmīr*) (Ibn al-Nafīs: 45). This, Ibn al-Nafīs emphasizes, is why the sultan must, like the infidels, come from the North or 'from a region near to them (*min arḍ taghrīb min-hum*)' (Ibn al-Nafīs: 45). Baybars, being of Turkish origin, was thus harsh enough to carry out this mission of salvation. And he did indeed have character traits similar to those of the Mongols. The treatise thus constructs the sultan's legitimacy in contrast to the ideal sovereign described in his royal biographies and inscriptions, but assigns to him a role

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[44] Several years before the capture of Baghdad, the arrival of the Mongols at the gates of Europe in 1241 had also rekindled eschatological expectations. In a letter addressed to the king of England by Emperor Frederick II, preserved in Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, the Mongols are presented as God's instruments, charged with 'purifying' the Christians of their sins. See Matthieu Paris, 4: 112.

whose eschatological import is in line with the meaning of the title 'Alexander of the age' in his monumental epigraphy.

Apocalyptic literature and the eschatological role of the Turks and Mongols

Historically minded Islamic apocalyptic literature was abundant at the time of the Arab invasion of Christian territories in the early years of Islam (Cook 2002: 34-66), and later at the time of the Byzantine reconquest of some territories that had come under Islamic rule (Cook 2002: 66-84). Another cycle of historical apocalypses is linked to the Turkish intrusion into the Muslim world (Cook 2002: 84-91), an intrusion for which the Abbasid caliphs were blamed as they had introduced them into the Muslim empire as slaves (*mamlūk*) in their armies (Cook 2002: 84). In his study of Islamic apocalyptic literature, David Cook does not refer to any such text of the Mamluk period nor to Ibn al-Nafīs' treatise in particular. But the arrival of the Mongols in Islamic territories was often presented in an apocalyptic perspective by Muslim authors. Although the example chosen here does not directly concern Baybars' legitimacy, it would be of interest to compare a textual fragment – taken from the work of a Mamluk author – with the treatise of Ibn al-Nafīs. The two authors, although differing in their approaches, both adopt religious criteria to explain the surge of the infidel Mongols across the Islamic empire.

Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 1333) was both a historian and an official in the administration of the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (d. 1341). He compiled an encyclopaedia covering the entire range of knowledge that a man of his age was expected to gain.[45] A part of this monumental encyclopaedia, composed between 1314 and

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[45] *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*: 'On the art of reaching the goal in the different branches of learning,' *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, *Thesaurus. Index* 1980: 105. Arabic titles are in most cases impossible to translate into English and do not provide a good indication of the work's precise content.

1330, deals with the Mongols. One episode is of particular interest to us here, that concerning the rise to power of Chinggis Khan.[46] Al-Nuwayrī begins his account of the future Great Khan's origins by reporting that he was said to have led the life of an ascetic (*tazahhada*) for a long time and to have withdrawn to the mountains. The reason for [this behaviour] was his conversation with a certain Jew whom he asked why Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad had attained such a lofty position. The Jew replied that they had dedicated themselves to God and that He had granted them that dignity in recompense for their love for Him. Chinggis Khan then asked him, 'If I love God and dedicate myself to Him, will he give me such a position?' The Jew replied, 'Yes, and I can tell you that, in our books, it is written that a dynasty will be descended from you' (al-Nuwayrī, 27: 207).

Chinggis Khan at once gave up his blacksmith's trade, left his people and withdrew to the mountain, where he ate only permitted foods (*al-mubāḥāt*), that is, those permitted by Islam. When people came to visit him, he refused to speak to them, but indicated they should clap their hands and say, 'O God, O God (*yā Allāh, yā Allāh*)' (al-Nuwayrī, 27: 207). Chinggis Khan would then start dancing. This amounts to a description of a rite of *dhikr* and a *samā'* (the Sufi practice of repeating the name of God while dancing).[47] Al-Nuwayrī's purpose is to present the future conqueror of the Muslim territories in the guise of an ascetic who aspires to God, despite his un-Islamic heritage (Lyall 2006: 155). In doing so, the Mamluk historian, like Ibn al-Nafīs, puts forward a divine justification for Chinggis Khan's success.

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[46] Somewhat divergent interpretations of this passage have been the subject of two publications (Amitai 2001: 23-36; Lyall 2006: 153-60). The intent here is not to discuss the arguments of those authors, but to show that al-Nuwayrī's description of the Mongols' arrival in the Islamic world was explained in ways very similar to that of Ibn al-Nafīs.

[47] On *dhikr*, see Gardet 1977: 230-33; on *samā'*, see During 1995: 1052-4.

God has rewarded Chinggis Khan's love and devotion for him, as he did for the three prophets of monotheism, by granting victories to him and to his descendants. Lyall (2006: 54) considers that al-Nuwayrī projects the image of a fourteenth-century Sufi onto the figure of Chinggis Khan. I am more inclined to think that the Mamluk historian gives a description of the origins of the future Mongol Great Khan in the same perspective as Ibn al-Nafīs, as a scourge of God, without considering him to be the eschatological last emperor. But in presenting Chinggis Khan as a figure who knows of the prophets of the three monotheistic religions, and who, while not belonging to any religion, seeks God and withdraws from the world, he turns him into a 'proto-Muslim' who becomes the instrument of divine decree. Al-Nuwayrī thus gives, *a posteriori*, a divine justification for the abolition of the 'Abbasid caliphate and the various Ilkhanid invasions of Syria-Palestine. This short account in fact amounts to an apocalyptic text whose objectives are consistent with those of Ibn al-Nafīs.

Baybars versus Hülegü

Finally, I propose to analyse a Christian apocalyptic text, composed in Karshuni (Syriac written in the Arabic alphabet), which can be read in comparison to Ibn al-Nafīs' text. It is a *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* concerning the Mongol invasions, addressed to the apostle Peter.[48] This particular genre of texts appeared in Syriac in response to challenges that were of both religious and political character. The authors of *Testament* kept their community's faith alive through the authority of Christ and his apostles in times that were – due to particular historical circumstances – troubled ones for Christian communities.[49]

The historical data in this *Testament* includes the arrival of the Mongols in the Muslim empire, the successors of Hülegü

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[48] Description of this text in Graf 1944, 1: 292. It has been published in Arabic alphabet by Ziadé 1918-1919: 261-73, 433-44.

[49] On the various 'Testaments of Our Lord Jesus Christ' during the first four centuries of Islam, see Debié 2005: 128-39.

(with a reference to Ghazan Khan's conversion), Baybars' seizure of power, and the description of his successors' reigns. We can judge from this that it cannot have been composed before the early fourteenth century. The content of this apocalypse is quite different from that of Ibn al-Nafīs' text: the author gives a Christian view of the Mongol invasions. This *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Apostle Peter* is notable for its strong historic character; indeed, it is that rare creature, a genuine historical apocalypse. It gives the names of people and places, an unusual occurrence in this type of literature whose content is of a symbolic nature and which, to be understood, must be interpreted in the light of Biblical texts. As we have seen, Ibn al-Nafīs does not mention Baybars by name, though the contemporary reader of his text would understand that he is indeed the person foretold by al-Kāmil as the eschatological last emperor. A true counterpart to the 'Epistle' of Ibn al-Nafīs, the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* takes this one step further: 'Know, Peter, that scourges and terrors will fall upon my people from the sons of Ismāʿīl[50] (*banū Ismāʿīl*) [...]. Then I warn you, Peter, that in that time there will rise up against them [the Muslims of Syria-Palestine] sultans that will be called al-Ẓawāhir [...].[51] These sons of slaves will sit on golden seats and the sons of free men will stand about their heads, like slaves (*Testament*: 262).' This is a direct reference to the emergence of the Mamluk state, which as we have seen arose from a military caste whose origins lay outside Syria-Palestine. The author of the *Testament* was greatly influenced by memory of the reign of Baybars (whose name, as we shall see below, is explicitly mentioned in the text). He refers to the Mamluk sultans as al-Ẓawāhir, a distortion of al-Malik al-Ẓāhir (the Magnificent Sovereign), Baybars' honorific title (*laqab*).[52] 'From being slaves, they will become sultans who know neither father nor mother,' writes the author of the *Testament*, emphasizing

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[50] Banū Ismāʿīl referring to the Muslims.
[51] On the origin of this name, see *infra*.
[52] On the term *laqab*, see Bosworth 1986: 622-35.

Baybars' want of lineage (*Testament*: 262). We then find the theme of the deterioration of religious life in the Muslim community, which justified the Mamluk seizure of power: 'At that time, sin multiplied, as did fornication (*al-zīnā*) and false witnesses (*al-shahādāt al-zūr*)' (*Testament*: 262). The description of Hülegü's arrival in the Muslim empire is consistent with historical fact: 'I warn you again, Peter, that a powerful and impious king (*malik qawī kāfir*) whose name is Hulawūn will come out of the East' (*Testament*: 262). Hülegü is, to a certain extent, presented as an eschatological last emperor, but this time one sent by God to save the Christian community from the ignominies that the sons of Ismā'īl are inflicting on it. Hülegü spills the blood of the Muslims, seizes Baghdad, thereby destroying the Abbasid caliphate, and takes Aleppo; his great emir Kitbugha, whose name is also cited, reaches Damascus; he pushes on as far as the Holy Land, then stops at a spring ('Ayn-mā)[53]. One notes that the author of the *Testament*, who presents the Mongols as agents of divine providence come to deliver the Christian communities from the Islamic yoke, makes no mention of Baybars' defeat of the Mongols at 'Ayn Jālūt.[54]

This apocalyptic text recalls Baybars' regicide: 'Quṭuz, who defeated Kitbugha, was killed by the emirs, his relatives' (*Testament*: 263). The author of the *Testament* constructs the figure of Baybars as the inverse of Hülegü. He writes that 'This Turk, Bībars, who will seize power, will be bad [for the Christians]. He will take your own city, Antioch, Peter, [...], he will reduce the churches to ruin and massacre the priests and

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[53] 'Ayn-mā for 'Ayn Jālūt.

[54] Hülegü and his Nestorian Christian wife, Doquz Khatun, were depicted with the characteristics of Constantine and Helen in the traditional description of the feast of the Cross in a Jacobite lectionary dated to 1260 in the Vatican library: see Leroy 1964: 280-302. On the dating of this manuscript, see Fiey 1975: 23, 59-64. Another Syriac manuscript, held in the British Library in London, also depicts Constantine and Helen with Mongol features (described in Leroy 1964: 302-13). However, some portrayals of Constantine and Helen with Turkic features are found before the arrival of the Mongols in Persia.

monks' (*Testament*: 263). The description of events in *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* is entirely at one with the accounts of Baybars' actions given by the Islamic sources; this apocalyptic text may, in fact, be considered, to some extent, a historical account. The author describes events from a Christian perspective and lays the emphasis, as did Ibn al-Nafīs, on the harshness of Baybars' reign for the Christian and Muslim populations. It must therefore be read in contrast to the Mamluk sultan's royal historiography, to the eschatological dimension given his reign by the title 'Alexander of the age' in his monumental epigraphy, and to his role as last emperor in Ibn al-Nafīs' treatise. While he refrains from placing too much emphasis on Hülegü's providential role, the author of the *Testament*, a Syriac Christian, does not stress the violence of the Mongol conquests. He conveys the positive view that the Christians took of the infidel Mongol rule of Muslim lands. The Ilkhans, who had Nestorian wives, were indeed favourable to the Eastern Christians, at least until Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam in 1295, as is attested by the Persian sources.[55]

Conclusion

Comparison of this group of texts yields a wealth of information on the process of legitimation deployed in Baybars' favour, and also the Muslim and Christian perceptions of the Mongol invasions in the innermost heart of the Islamic empire. From the time he seized power, Baybars sought to make up for his lack of lineage by incorporating himself into a symbolic line of fighters for the faith who had been aided by God; this is attested by the 'Testament of Victory (*Mashhad al-naṣr*)' that he had erected at 'Ayn Jālūt to commemorate his resounding victory over the

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[55] Ghazan's pro-Islamic policy must be put in context. His amir Nōrūz, the architect of his conversion to Islam, was responsible for it: see Aubin 1995: 62. It is also worth recalling that Ghazan fought his military campaigns in Syria-Palestine with Armenian and Georgian Christians in his armies. See Stewart 2001: 136-53; Amitai 2002: 239-44; Aigle 2006: 10-14; *idem* 2007: 89-120.

Mongol troops. He also sought to use the same occasion to erase the memory of sultan Quṭuz's murder by claiming the victory as his own on the monument. The regicide of his former master's natural heir was another memory that Baybars sought to purge, here claiming Ayyubid legitimacy by keeping the .name that linked him to the Ayyubid sultan.

The propagandists of the sultan, seeking Islamic legitimacy, emphasized his image as the ideal Muslim sovereign. He is presented in the narrative sources and in his monumental epigraphy as a fighter for the faith (*al-ghāzī*), aided by God in his military victories (*al-mu'ayyad*), a just (*al-'ādil*) and pious sovereign. This image conforms to that of the ideal sovereign of the Mirror for the Princes. Ibn al-Nafīs, whose concern is to justify the harshness of Baybars' rule towards the Muslim populations of Syria-Palestine, makes the sultan the eschatological last emperor. He has saved the Muslim community by cleansing it of its sins, but also by delivering it from the Mongol danger in the region. In the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, for the Christians the roles here were reversed in favour of Hülegü. After the fall of Baghdad, the latter soon came to be seen as the 'New Constantine' who was thus counterposed to the figure of Baybars as the eschatological 'New Alexander'.

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Chapter 3

Explaining Rituals And Writing History: Tactics Against The Intermediate Class

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Broad interpretations of the Mongol successor states in East Asia (the Yuan dynasty) and Southwest Asia (the Ilkhanate) have emphasized the role the two great agrarian ideologies, Confucianism and Islam, played in 'taming' and assimilating the Mongols. In this interpretation, events such as Ghazan Qan's conversion in 1295 or Qubilai Qa'an's reforms of 1260 and the revival of the examination system in 1315 mark the victory of these agrarian ideologies over Mongol traditions. While more sophisticated analyses have questioned the degree to which Mongol traditions were replaced in the later Ilkhanate or the Yuan dynasty, they usually present the same basic narrative in which the *nomadic* legacy of the pristine Mongols is precisely what must be changed and converted by Confucianism or Islam.

This approach underplays, however, the degree to which many Confucians and Muslims were eager to assimilate the Mongols not by a model of 'conversion,' but, to borrow a term from Islamic vocabulary, one of 'reversion.' In this model it is precisely the primitive dynastic founders of the Mongols who were untutored practitioners of the Confucian or Islamic religion. Far from having to reject their primitive nomadic past to embrace the sophisticated new ideology, this 'reversionist' model involved returning to the ancestral legacy that had made the Chinggisids world rulers in the first place. And not incidentally, this reversionist model also saw civilization as having powers to corrupt as well as to improve. Mongols in the hands of the *wrong* model of literate civilization (idolatrous Buddhists for the Muslims or greedy Turkestanis for the Confucians) would lose their native virtues, thus becoming worse than they had been before their conquests. In this situation, calling on the Mongols to be loyal to the legacy of Chinggis Qan and their simple ancestors

was an *aid,* not an impediment to 'reversion' – reversion to an aristocratic model of rule placed in opposition to the commercial values embraced by rival, suspect tutors – the Uyghurs above all.

Ritualists and Monotheists

Confucian efforts to reinterpret the Mongol ancestral state as an exemplar of their own virtues focused on seasonal ritual worship of Heaven and the imperial ancestors. A number of such rituals constituted the raw material for the re-imagination of the Mongols as proto-Confucians. As such, however, they had to be recast and reinterpreted: simple and Mongol in form, but Confucian in spirit and ritual intent. Zhang Dehui 張德輝's account of his visit to the prince Qubilai in 1247-1248, is both the first documented and one of the most subtle and effective examples of this effort at reinterpretating the Mongol tradition. In his travelogue *Lingbei jixing* 嶺北紀行 ('Notes on a Journey North of the Ranges'), Zhang Dehui noted, like all travelers in the Mongol empire, the ways in which the Mongols reversed typical polarities of agricultural civilization: 'Their clothes must be furs or leather, or else they will not be good enough. For their food they take mutton meat as their staple and grains like rice as a delicacy.' On the New Year's Day, he writes 'everyone from the prince on down wore pure white garments' – the color of mourning in China (Erdemtü 1994: 183, 93). At several points, however, he interjects short phrases that implicitly flag the Mongolian rituals as ethnic examples of Confucian universal principles: 'it is the practice of yearly offerings' (*xiu shi si ye* 修時祀也); 'it is the esteem of simplicity' (*shang zhi ye*尚質也); 'it is a ceremony' (*li ye* 禮也; Erdemtü 1994: 183, 92-3). These phrases, along with his travelogue's interweaving of nomadic migrations with seasonal rituals, place nomadism not so much within the category of the foreign or barbaric as within that of the simple and authentic. After describing the cycle of nomadism, he writes 'This is the proper thing to do according to the local practices and is a general outline of their customs' (Erdemtü 1994: 185, 111). He describes the ritual implements used during the koumiss ceremonies: 'For their utensils they use only birch wood, and do not make use of gold or silver to decorate their services,' and added (as noted before) 'it is the esteem of simplicity' (*shang zhi ye*; Erdemtü

1994: 183, 92). Simplicity (*zhi* 質; with the implications of authenticity and vigor) is one of the keywords of Confucian thinking marking those persons and institutions which are primitive yet have the capability of being fruitfully elaborated into a healthy civilization (see McMullen 1973: 321-31; cf. Analects, VI.16, XII.8 in Legge 1960: 190, 254-5).

Zhang Dehui also gives instruction to Qubilai on the nature of ritual practice. At the very beginning, in response to Qubilai's query about how Confucius's nature (*xing* 性) can be present so long after his death, Zhang explains that a *shengren* 聖人 or 'lawgiver'[1] is not separate from the operations of nature; so to make him present one only has to practice his teachings (Erdemtü 1994: 181, 83-4). After performing a spring sacrifice to Confucius, Zhang Dehui presents the sacrificial meat to Qubilai and deflects his question about the precise ritual in Confucian temples, by explaining that the point of ritual is not some propitiation or feeding of the spirit of the deceased, but to reflect the ruler's reverence for Confucius's way (Erdemtü 1994: 184, 101-2). Implicitly, Zhang speaks to his readers as well, Confucian literati to whom he is advertising the great possibilities in working with this promising prince: the point of ritual is not the technique, but the display of the celebrant's attitude, and the attitude of this Mongol celebrant, as expressed through his diligent attendance to peculiarly *Mongol* ceremonial, is eminently *Confucian*.

Zhang Dehui perhaps had to explain this point on the significance of the worship of Confucius, precisely because it differed from the approach to Confucianizing the Mongols taken earlier by the famous Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材. Rather than identify Mongol ritual practice with Confucian theory, Yelü Chucai had offered Confucianism as basically the cult of Confucius himself. It thus brought Confucianism under the rubric of a foreign religion, one of the many patronized by the Mongols, and implicitly to be

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[1] In the Yuan context, this translation of *sheng* is much preferable to the usual 'sage' or 'saint.' The *sheng* is the founder of a dynasty who creates the ritual and administrative system to be followed religiously by his successors. His role is thus similar to the ancient Greek lawgivers such as Lycurgus, or even the 'prophets' – armed and unarmed – of Machiavelli's *Prince*: Moses, Romulus, etc.

understood by the Mongols in the way the Mongols understood such religions in general: as the propitiation of Heaven/God by holy men through a founder identified by that religion as being with God.

Yelü Chucai's approach had begun with the building of a temple to Confucius in Mongol-occupied Zhongdu 中都 (modern Beijing) in Chinggis Qan's reign (Song 1976: 76.1892), and came to full flower in Ögedei's reign after the destruction of the Jin. With an introduction to the *qa'an* Ögedei by Yelü Chucai, Kong Yuancuo 孔元措, descendant of Confucius in the 51st generation, came north for an imperial audience. A temple of Confucius was set up in Qara-Qorum and an ensemble of over 50 performers practicing ritual music and dance was formed with imperial patronage in Dongpingfu 東平府, near Confucius's home town of Qufu 曲阜 (Yelü 1986: 328; Song 1976: 2.32-3, 76.1892, 68.1691). Yelü Chucai had Confucian scholars treated alongside Buddhists and Daoists as one of the 'foreign' religions of the empire, granted tax exemptions in return for praying for the emperor (Su [1335] 1996: 81; Song 1976: 146.3459; see Atwood 2004)

Despite Zhang Dehui's admonitions about not mistaking the trees of the details of the cult of Confucius for the forest of the principles involved, Prince Qubilai continued to have a deep interest in the details of the Confucian cult. During Möngke Qa'an's reign (1251-1259), in which Qubilai had risen from being merely one of dozens of Mongol princes to being both the brother of the *qa'an* and the viceroy of North China, he appears to have attempted a pre-mature effort to merge the ritual used in the cult of Confucius with traditional Mongol practices.

In 1252, Möngke Qa'an ordered the local Chinese myriarch to make the ensemble in Dongpingfu practice before summoning them to Mongolia in the fifth moon, together with their musical instruments and ritual utensils. On the 7th day of the eighth moon (September 12, 1252), the day before Möngke Qa'an was to worship Heaven at a place the Chinese sources call Sun-Moon Mountain (*Riyueshan* 日月山), generally identified with Burqan Qaldun, he interviewed the musicians, asked them about the origin of this music, and had them demonstrate their instruments. Meanwhile, a ritual crown and gown (*guanmian fafu*

冠冕法服) was made for Möngke to wear at this worship. On September 16-17, Möngke sacrificed to 'wide Heaven and empress Earth,' and the spirits of Chinggis Qan and Tolui, accompanied by the Dongpingfu ritual musicians. For the first time, spirit tablets of Chinggis Qan and Tolui were made, and the descendant of Confucius, Kong Yuancuo, spoke a ritual address. The whole idea of inviting the Dongpingfu musicians is attributed by later writers to Qubilai (see Song 1976: 68.1691-2, 72.1780-1, 78.1935, 158.3714, 174.4067).

It is not stated what impression this worship made on Möngke, but circumstantial evidence indicates that it was not positive. The *qa'an* is recorded as having conducted sacrifices to Heaven in the years 1254 at Köke-Na'ur and in 1257 at Gün Na'ur – in both cases, neither his brother Qubilai, nor the Confucian ritualists are recorded as being present (Song 1976: 3.48, 3.50, 72.1781). Qubilai continued to patronize the musicians in Dongpingfu, but they were not invited again to Mongolia. Politically, we know Möngke at first cooperated with Qubilai's plans for a Confucian administration of North China, but by 1257 he had cracked down, auditing Qubilai's officials and closing down his new-fangled 'Pacification Commissions' (Su [1335] 1996: 126, 160; cf. Song 1976: 4.60). By the time William of Rubruck met him, Möngke was a born-again Mongol, who was reinterpreting the rituals of his people as a mark not of Confucian sentiment, but national pride. Even Chinggis Qan had agreed with the Daoist adept Changchun that his addiction to hunting was harmful (Wang 1962: 360-1 [*Xi* II, 8b-9a]; cf. Li/Waley 1979: 118), but for Möngke, hunting was not just a pleasure, but a way of 'honoring the commandments of his ancestors' (Song 1976: 3.54). William of Rubruck and the *Yuan shi* 元史 editors agree that scapulimancy was Möngke's passion, and the Catholic missionary has preserved his eloquent defense of his adherence to the traditional Mongolian religion and its clergy (Jackson and Morgan 1990: 34.2.236-7).

As is well-known, Qubilai's accession to the throne in 1260 marked a great advance in the patronage of Confucianism. What again needs emphasizing is that the Confucian party among the Mongols (led by the descendants of Chinggis Qan's great *nökörs*, such as Muqali, Boroyul, and Bo'orcu, and the famous

darqan Kishiliq, as well as Qubilai's heir apparent Jingim 真金) implicitly based this patronage on 'reversionist' principles: not 'conversion' to foreign, Chinese Confucianism, but 'reversion' to the basic traditions of the empire's founding, recast, of course, as congruent with Confucian political and ritual principles. In the family histories and inscriptions of *nökör* families, usually composed in Chinese by Confucian scholars based on Mongolian family tradition (collected in Su [1335] 1996), service to the dynastic founder and current advocacy of Confucian methods of government are placed in effortless continuity: the simple nomad fathers give birth to broad-minded sons of noble family far above petty profit.[2] In his preface to Su Tianjue's collection, Ouyang Xiu extolled how men like Haryasun and Öljei exuded the 'savor of the wise councilors of old' (Su [1335] 1996: ii), implicitly linking the simplicity of being Mongol with the simplicity of being classical. The presupposition was stated by Qubilai's son Jingim in 1270 after a session of trading *bilig*s (wise sayings, *xun* 訓 in Chinese) from Chinggis Qan, Qubilai Qa'an, and other old Mongols. Jingim concluded, 'I have observed of the sayings of Confucius that they are one with our lawgivers' teachings (*shengxun* 聖訓)' (Song 1976: 115.2888). This understanding of the identity of the dynastic teachings and the sayings of Confucius was given institutional expression under Emperor Yisün-Temür when he set the curriculum of his revived Classics Colloquium: one of the Confucian 'Four Books' (the *Great Learning*), selections from Sima Guang's history, two Tang-dynasty handbooks of rule, and the wise sayings of Qubilai Qa'an himself (Song 1976: 29.644, 29.657-8, 30.669, 30.671, 30.680, and 143.3413). Yisün-Temür's successor Tuq-Temür Jaya'atu Qa'an (Emperor Wenzong) was a much more thoroughly Confucian ruler, but he too believed in this identity. In a passage quoted twice in the *Yuan shi*, he exhorted Mongol and Chinese Confucians to not decline positions in his newly created Hall of Literature:

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[2] See, for example, the description of Kishiliq's descendant Haryasun's political creed in Su 1962: 25.5b-6a; Su [1335] 1996: 58.

Our ancestors in ancient times had deep sagacity and quick intelligence; entering into the Way to attain order (*zhili zhi dao* 致理之道)[3] for them was something of which they naturally had an innate knowledge (*ziran shengzhi* 自然生知). We have now inherited what they have handed down, but being truly weak in body, are day and night anxious and afraid. Ourselves being still young in years and scaling sufferings and fording difficulties, how could the cultivation of ritual be generally known in the country since compared to our ancestors we lack the brilliance of innate knowledge? Therefore I established the Hall of Literature, and appointed academicians, so that every day the wise sayings (*mingxun* 明訓) of the ancestors and the old tales of how in antiquity anarchy was controlled and losses were recovered might be set before me, and allow me to rejoice in hearing them and so that all that is studied by you ministers might be made to assist our will. As for the urgent affairs of army and state, I have the Secretariat, the Privy Council, and the Censorate to handle them; they are not you ministers' duty. Do not again decline this task! (composite translation from Song 1976: 34.751 and 181.4178).

The bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1338 made the same point more baldly:

Even if the present-day Mongol people have not studied letters, every time they say but a word and every time they do a deed, it agrees with the deeds of the ancient sages and wise men [i.e. the writers of the Confucian classics and their commentaries]. If you ask what is the reason, surely it is that they were born by the destiny of Heaven! (Cleaves 1951: 54 [Mongolian], 69 [translation from the Mongolian], 30 [translation from the Chinese], pls. viii-ix [Chinese]).

It is of course common to dismiss such statements as mere rhetoric. The point here is not the sincerity or lack of it, but to observe the unity asserted between of the wise sayings of the Yuan dynastic ancestors and the lessons of Chinese antiquity, and

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[3] This phrase stems from the *Zhenguan zhengyao* 貞觀政要 ; see Lewis 1962: 569.

the assertion that the early dynastic ancestors had instinctual, inborn knowledge of the vital Neo-Confucian ideas of principle (*li* 理) and ritual (*li* 禮).

This identity was of course to be played out in the cultic activities. Two in particular, Mongol sacrifices to heaven and ancestral worship, were incorporated into the new system's rituals as the particular customs of the dynasty. The South China scholar Yu Ji 虞集 and the Önggüd Zhao Shiyan 趙世延, editors of the 1330 *Jingshi dadian* 經世大典 ('Compendium on Administering the World') identified the worship of Heaven and the ancestors as the two Mongol ritual forms that would be incorporated into the dynastic ritual calendar. About the former, the editors commented:

> Only the Son of Heaven may sacrifice to Heaven; that was the ancient system. Our empire established a great name to oversee the world and had its own ritual for worshiping Heaven. Their hat and costumes were very simple (*zhi* 質), their ritual utensils were very pure (*chun* 純). The emperor and empress performed in person as lineal and marriage relatives assisted the worship, leading the hereditary officials. Those who were not of these clans were not allowed to approach it, as they honored their roots and returned to their origins. It sprang from nature itself and was not a system enforced through artificial compulsion. This can be seen from the correspondence of officials (Su 1962: 41.9a-b; cf. Song 1976: 72.1781).

The reference to the correspondence of officials may well allude to Zhang Dehui's account. By contrast, they acknowledged the existence of a primitive Mongol system of sacrifice to the ancestors, but gave no details: 'About the rituals (*li* 禮) of making sacrifice and offerings at the beginning of the dynasty, the ancestors had their own established laws. In the seventh moon of first year of *Zhongtong* 中統 [1260], the Emperor *Shizu* 世祖

[Qubilai] sacrificed to the ancestors at the Central Secretariat' (Su 1962: 41.9b).[4]

This differing treatment in the *Jingshi dadian* appears to reflect a compromise approach to the treatment of Mongolian ritual. Qubilai split the difference between adhering to Mongol ritual practice while giving it a Confucian interpretation or else recasting traditional rituals in a specifically Chinese Confucian idiom: the worship of Heaven would be left in the Mongol fashion, but ancestral worship would be recast. In 1261, as he journeyed north to fight Ariq-Böke, 'on the *ji/hai* 己亥 day of the fourth moon [May 8, 1261], in summer, he personally worshiped Heaven while northwest of old Huanzhou 桓州 [in Inner Mongolia], sprinkling mare's milk for the ritual. Apart from the imperial family, no one was allowed to participate and it was all according to the original manner' (Song 1976: 72.1781).[5] This worship was continued in Shangdu 上都 annually on the 24th of the sixth moon, with sprinkling of mare's milk, sacrifices to Heaven and to Chinggis Qan, and horse races (Song 1976: 77.1924; Serruys 1974: 3). Not until 1275 did Qubilai express any interest in the traditional Chinese forms of sacrificing to Heaven outside the city limits, and Qubilai's successor Temür was the first Yuan emperor to practice in person this traditional imperial prerogative (Song 1976: 72.1681-2).

The ancestral cult was less amenable to incorporation. From his death, the worship of Chinggis Qan had been associated

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[4] In their chapter of the *Yuan shi* based on this chapter, the *Yuan shi* editors supplied the details not found in the extant *Jingshi dadian* materials: 'Their ancestors' rituals (*li*) of making sacrifices and offerings were to slaughter livestock, make libations of mare's milk, and have the Mongol shamans pray and deliver an address; these were the dynastic customs' (Song 1976: 74.1831).

[5] Given how this episode of worship was linked to Qubilai's military campaign, one wonders whether the worship of heaven paralleled the famous instances where Chinggis, Batu, and others retreated to a mountaintop, undid their belt, and doffed their hat, to beg for victory from Heaven before an on-coming battle; see Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 80-1 (Khorazm), 270-1 (Muhi); Juzjani 1881: vol. 2, 954 (North China); and Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 1, 129 (North China).

with his *ordos* or palace tents.[6] In the first years of his reign, Qubilai was not able to go to Mongolia to conduct worship there, due to the war with his brother Ariq-Böke. This dilemma and the localization of the cult even in the Mongol tradition may have suggested the possibility of following the Chinese style and building a physical temple of the ancestor in territory he controlled. In 1260, Qubilai Qa'an had an ancestral shrine built in the offices of the Secretariat in Yanjing 燕京 (Daidu 大都, modern Beijing), entrusting the worship to clerks. The Confucian musicians of Dongpingfu were again recruited, and new spirit tablets in the Chinese model were added to those used by Möngke at Sun-Moon Mountain. A separate temple was built in 1262, and the conduct of ancestral worship gradually elaborated over the years into eight halls for Yisügei, Chinggis, Ögedei, Joci, Ca'adai, Güyüg, Tolui, Möngke, and their consorts (Song 1976: 74.1831, 70.1752-5).[7] At first Mongol princes and Chinese officials were entrusted with worship, but in the 1280s, supervision of this

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[6] This worship of Chinggis Qan was evidently modeled on the various pre-Chinggisid sacrifices mentioned in the SHM, but was begun on a new scale in 1228, during the interregnum of Tolui. In the autumn of 1228, Ögedei proceeded from his own *nutuq* on the Emil and Qobaq rivers (in modern day northern Xinjiang) to the tents of the *ordos* of Chinggis Qan (Wang 1962: 201 [*Sheng*, 98a]; Song 1976: 2.29). The *Yuan shi* says the purpose was to mourn the recently deceased *qan*. It also describes Möngke carrying out such worship in 1257: 'The emperor had an audience at the Great Founder's palace tent, and sacrificed to its standard and drums' (Song 1976: 3.50). Juvaini, speaking of the worship at Ögedei's coronation mentions aspects which the *Yuan shi* passed over in silence: 'He commanded that for three days in succession they should prepare victuals for the spirit of Chingiz-Khan; also that . . . they should select forty maidens of the race of the emirs and *noyans* to be decked out with jewels, ornaments, and fine robes, clad in precious garments and dispatched together with choice horses to join his spirit' (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 189).

[7] Curiously, this list of those ancestors of Qubilai given a place in the ancestral shrine is exactly the same as those between Yisügei and Möngke given a separate biography in Rashid al-Din's history (see Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999). Is this a coincidence deriving from the application of similar principles, or else the reflection of some common Mongol list of the emperors?

worship had become a duty of Mongol officials in the Hanlin Academy 翰林院, familiar with both Confucianism and the Mongol *bilig* tradition (Song 1976: 74.1831-5). Yet even in this very Chinese physical environment, four times a year Mongolian-style worship was carried on with shamans (*Menggu wu* 蒙古巫) making addresses in Mongolian in the presence of the officials, censors, and erudites (*boshi* 博士): the very officials most responsible for conforming government practice to Confucian ritual (Song 1976: 77.1923-4).

Thus, while the worship of Confucius had been recommended to the Mongols by Yelü Chucai as a 'foreign' cult, alongside Buddhism and Daoism, the approach of Zhang Dehui, of merging the two by identifying Mongol rituals as early, natural versions of Confucian ones, proved in the end the more fruitful path to take. The main point at issue, to put it in the Confucian terms of cyclic alteration between *zhi* 質 'substance' and *wen* 文 'pattern,' was how much the simple (*zhi*) Mongolian ritual should be modified to fit the new, more sophisticated (*wen*) conditions of the dynasty at its height.

Many Muslims in the service of the *qan*, like Confucians, also treated the religion of the Mongol imperial founders as an untutored version of their own faith. A number of Muslim writers put considerable effort into portraying the religion of Chinggis Qan and the old Mongols as monotheistic and different from idolatry. One sees this quite clearly in the *History of the World Conqueror* when the author, 'Ala ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, contrasts the Mongol founding with that of the ancient Uyghurs. While acknowledging the presence of corrupt customs among the pre-Chinggisid Mongols, Juvaini praised how the great conqueror 'established such usages as were praiseworthy from the point of view of reason,' and added '[t]here are many of these ordinances that are in conformity with the Shari'at' (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 25). Similarly, he sees the Mongol practice of concluding their orders of submission with the phrase 'And if ye do otherwise, what know we? God knoweth' as an indication that 'these are the words of them that put their trust in God' which was the root of their success (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 25-6). Finally, the famous Teb Tenggeri is nowhere designated as a shaman (Turkish, *qam*); instead he appears as a figure of whom 'trustworthy Mongols'

report deeds of asceticism and who speaks to and for 'God' (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 39). In short, the Chinggisid Mongols appear as a kind of eruption of monotheistic reason and prophecy in the heart of degraded ignorance.

Juvaini maintains this appearance of untutored reason by transferring his description of shamanship to the Uyghurs, whose story he tells as a kind of idolatrous counterpoint to the rise of the monotheistic Mongols. Here he mentions the *qam* as 'experts in magic' among both the Uyghurs and the Mongols who experience possession by devils, particularly after 'they have satisfied their natural lust in an unnatural way.' The Mongols 'yielded obedience to the words of these *qam*; and even now their princes . . . will conclude nothing until these astrologers have given their consent' (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 59). Thus Juvaini bifurcates Inner Asian religion: the reasonable worship of one God displayed by Chinggis Qan and even Teb Tenggeri on the one hand, and the magical, immoral, and superstitious worship of unnamed Mongols and the ancient Uyghurs on the other.[8] The result of the former, his narrative goes on to demonstrate, is friendliness to Muslims and eschewing bigotry (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 26, 66-7, 68, etc.), while the fruit of the latter is hostility to Muslims and conversion to idolatry, i.e. Buddhism (pp. 59-60, 48-9, etc.).[9]

It is unclear to what degree Juvaini's book was addressed to and read by Mongols. But in the Ilkhanate, Rashid al-Din, definitely writing for Mongols, also describes how Muslim

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[8] Only in describing the human sacrifice at Chinggis Qan's funeral does Juvaini associate the Mongols with pre-prophetic ignorance, resistant to the divine message (Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 189).

[9] Juvaini's treatment contrasts strikingly with that of Minhaj al-Din Juzjani. Juzjani makes Chinggis Qan himself to be a demonic obverse of a prophet, who 'was an adept in magic and deception' who would periodically fall into a trance and foretell events by the influence of 'the devils who had power over him.' Juzjani also mentions the conqueror's thorough acquaintance with scapulimancy (Juzjani 1881: vol. 2, 1077-8). Juzjani's overall portrait of Mongol religion is not much different from that of Juvaini's, except that features which Juvaini shunted off into his chapter on the Uyghurs were attached by Juzjani to Chinggis Qan himself.

Mongols saw their newly adopted religion as one with that of their ancient forbearers. In 1302, as he passed the vicinity of Kermanshah, Ghazan Qan recalled the troubles of his early reign when 'a revelation had come to him from the unseen realm and given him relief.' Going to the spot several years later with his ladies and commanders, 'all those present tied tokens to the tree [where the revelation had occurred], and it became like a shrine.' After the commanders danced, Bolad Chingsang, the famous *noyan* who had come to Iran from the Yuan dynasty, told the tale of the pre-Chinggisid Mongol ruler Qutula Qa'an, famous for his huge size, loud voice, and great strength. He too, said Bolad, had made a vow to God that if he won victory over his enemies (in this case, the Merkid) that he would turn the tree where he was standing into a shrine and decorate it with strips of colored cloth.[10] After doing so, 'in gratitude to the creator' he and his commanders danced until the area around the tree sank a yard into the earth (this incident is alluded to briefly in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, §57). Ghazan Qan responded to this story by saying, 'Were it not for our ancestors' sincerity and devotion, God would not have made them rulers of the kings of the world and would not have elevated their progeny to high status' (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 653-4). Thus, on Rashid al-Din's showing, Ghazan Qan's mature Islamic faith was nourished by the same reading of the Mongol tradition as primitive monotheism that had been first pioneered in Juvaini's works.

In his own introduction to his history, Rashid al-Din draws out this same point, writing that God had decreed that when the Muslim world needed chastisement, that such would happen not through polytheists, but through monotheists (p. 15). Ghazan's soldiers he described thus: 'some of whom were Mongol monotheists and others of whom were of idolatrous and polytheistic nations like the Uyghur et al.'[11] Ghazan Qan's own

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[10] Such strips of colored cloth (*darcag* or *seter* in Mongolian) commonly mark holy sites in Central and Inner Asia and Siberia, regardless of the religion involved.

[11] Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 1, 16; cf. vol. 3, 666, where 'idolaters, infidels, and Mongols' each appear as separate categories.

conversion is emphatically not from such Mongol monotheism, but from his ultimate rejection of the Buddhist idolatry of the *baqshi* ('teachers' or Buddhist clergy) who tutored him in his youth and for whom he built a temple at Khabushan (vol. 3, 619-20, 664). Only in a few places does the historian criticize old Mongol customs as irreligious, although even there the criticism is muted.[12] In a parenthetical comment on the traditional Mongol education, Rashid al-Din passed over in complete silence the shamans whom the Mongols are elsewhere said to have followed devotedly. Rather Rashid al-Din avers that 'since they have no religion community or religion in which to instruct as others do, fathers and mothers inculcate into every child that is born their tribe and genealogy' (vol. 1, 124). Placing this genealogical knowledge in comparative context, Rashid al-Din treats the Mongols as resembling pre-Islamic Arabs, in whose instruction God and religion are simply absent, and who as a result confine the education of their children to the family, not formal religious institutions. Indeed this passage only highlights that absolute – and highly suspicious – silence which Rashid al-Din maintains about the existence and role of shamans (i.e. native Mongol clergy, *bö'e* or *qam*) at the court of the Muslim Ilkhans. The last refuge of the reversionist argument, as will see, must often be simply silence.

Writing Histories

These programs of Confucianizing or Islamizing the Mongols' ancestors found their reflection in historical writing as well. This fact is obvious, of course, from my reference to Juvaini and Rashid al-Din, pre-eminent Persian historians of the Mongols, and I will not discuss their careers here. But it is also true of the today rather more obscure Mongols in the Yuan dynasty who were associated in various capacities with historical writing at Qubilai's court: Bolod (later Bolad Chingsang at the court of Ghazan Qan and one of Rashid al-Din's major sources), Qoryosun (for a time Qubilai's court diarist and then head of the

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[12] See Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 681-2 on the various improper oaths and exclamations used by the Mongol soldiery; vol. 3, 685 on Mongol burial customs.

historiographical institute), and Sarman (Qoryosun's successor as chief court historian and final compiler of the Veritable Records). Each one was also associated with the above noted program of elaborating a Confucian practice of Mongol ritual.

As Thomas Allsen has noted in his survey of Bolod's career, he and the high official Antong 安童 of the Jalayir, whose family was well known for its support of Confucians, were two important Mongol statesmen involved both in creating court ceremonial and in organizing the ancestral temple in Daidu (Allsen 2001: 65-6). Allsen also points out that circumstantial evidence places Bolod in close contact with the Mongol historian Sarman. Bolod, who eventually left the Yuan dynasty for the Middle East, is hence the most likely person to have transferred both actual texts, such as the Mongolian Veritable Records, and historiographical techniques such as the 'diary of activity and repose' and the plain style (Allsen 2001: 97, 99-102).

Qoryosun began his official career as Qubilai's court diarist and was one of the top officials responsible for the (fruitless) efforts to impose the Square Script on the entire Mongol bureaucracy of the Yuan (Song 1976: 6.120, 8.163, 7.142). As a Hanlin academician, he was responsible for historical compilations as well as managing the hostel for foreign envoys (this last position linked the roles of compiling information on foreign countries and handling and recording court audiences). In 1278, however, Qoryosun rose high enough that he gained the right to participate in (as opposed to merely record) high policy debates; in 1281 he received the high honorific title of Minister of Education (Song 1976: 10.200, 11.235). He eventually became the senior grand councilor for two years after Ahmad's downfall in 1282 (Song 1976: 12.241, 13.270). During the two years of his power, he vainly tried to reinstitute the examination system and eliminate the Bureau of Market Tax (*Quanfu si* 泉府司), the umbrella organ that managed loans of imperial funds to *ortoq* (merchant partners, Ch. *wotuo* 斡脫): the policy priorities of a true Confucian Mongol (see Song 1976: 13.269-70, 13.278, 81.2017-18).

Sarman first appears in the Yuan histories as an associate with Qoryosun in the refurbishing of a new and expanded shrine for the imperial ancestors. In line with the typically Confucian

idea that giving government edicts a proper literary expression, recording the sayings and deeds of the emperor, and the management of ritual activities are all deeply related phenomena, Qoryosun as a Hanlin academician personally handled the imperial tablets and led the officials in installing them in the new temple in 1281 (Song 1976: 74.1835). Sarman, then chamberlain for ceremonials, assisted Qoryosun, whom he later replaced as chief court historiographer and Minister of Education (Song 1976: 15.308-9, 16.353). Sarman was also associated with Qubilai's Confucian-minded heir apparent Jingim; we find him in 1270 offering the following *bilig* of Chinggis Qan for the prince's delectation: 'Chinggis Qan had a wise saying, "If you wish to rule your person, first rule your heart; if you wish to rebuke others, first rebuke yourself".'[13]

The historians of the Yuan court faced one great obstacle in arguing the compatibility of the Mongolian tradition with Confucian ethics: *The Secret History of the Mongols* (SHM), which had been written under Möngke from exactly the opposite point of view. As I have argued elsewhere (Atwood 2007), the SHM was written in 1252, and represents a remarkably coherent, if intensely partisan, view of the Mongol founding. This view reflected Möngke's increasingly categorical rejection of both Confucian-style administration in North China, and also the cultural universalism implicit in the Confucian reading of Mongol ritual. In the SHM, Mongol ritual is rooted in the proudly particular, purely Mongol historical experience.

On the issue of administration of North China, one obviously of central concern to the Yuan historians, the SHM played up the claim of Sigi Qutuqu as census taker and the

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[13] Song 1976: 115.2888. This *bilig* recalls the famous passage in the Great Learning, t. 5: 'Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated,' which is immediately followed by, 'Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed' (Legge 1960: 358-9). So completed, the *bilig* in turn recalls that Chinggisid saying reported by Rashid al-Din: 'Everyone who is capable of cleaning out his own insides is capable of cleansing a kingdom of banditry' (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 2, 294-5).

Muslim administrators Mahmud Yalavac and Mas'ud Beg as the real custodians of Chinggis's legacy. Sigi Qutuqu, who had carried out the first census almost twenty years before in 1234-1235 (Wang 1962: 215-17 [*Sheng*, 105a-106a], 490 [*Da*, 13b]; Yelü 1986: 328-9; Song 1976: 2.34) and who was awarded a fief of 4,000 households as an elder statesman in the very summer when the SHM was written (Song 1976: 95.2433, cf. 95.2442), was exalted as Chinggis Qan's chosen administrator of sedentary lands (SHM, §203). Meanwhile Mahmud Yalavac's tenure in North China, really begun in 1241 (Wang 1962: 203, 219 [*Sheng*, 99a, 107a]; Song 1976: 2.30, 37), was back-dated to 1223 and the end of Chinggis Qan's Central Asian expedition (SHM, §263).

By contrast, the Kitan Confucian Yelü Chucai was simply ignored. Implicitly, the Secret Historian thus sided with those like Mahmud Yalavac and Sigi Qutuqu who had demanded that the Turco-Mongol census practices be implemented in North China, and against those who argued for continuing the definitions of a household found in the Chinese tradition. Under Qubilai's administration, however, where his son was a high official, Yelü Chucai was a hero and precursor of the kind of administration Qubilai wished to create. Likewise, the minimization of Muqali's role in the SHM fit his family's weak prestige at the time of Möngke, but was most inappropriate when his descendant Antong was one of the leading figures at Qubilai's court and with Bolod one of the two high-ranking proponents of the imperial temple in which the compilers Qoryosun and Sarman led sacrifices.

While the portrait of Ögedei's mixed rule (four good points and four bad ones), Tolui's self-sacrifice, and Güyüg's arrogance and violence confirmed the justice of transferring rule to Tolui's family, the SHM also portrayed a number of incidents which were not edifying, such as the rape of Börte, the slaughter of all the Tatars higher than a linch-pin, Chinggis Qan's killing of his half-brother Begter, and so on. The wise words ascribed to the Great Founder's mother and wives justified the immensely important role Sorqaqtani Beki played in the rise of Möngke. But the repeated portrait of Chinggis Qan's susceptibility to fratricidal conflict – against Begter, against Qasar, against his uncle Daritai – constituted an implicit warning to heed the tale of the five arrows and maintain the solidarity of the Borjigid family, and

especially the sons of Sorqaqtani: Möngke, Qubilai, Hüle'ü, and Ariq Böke. It is hard to tell what would be less palatable to Qubilai's historians: the shocking deviations from the idea of brotherly unity found in the SHM, or the ideal of fraternal, collective rule expressed therein. Tellingly, the fable of the five brothers breaking five arrows individually but being unable to do so collectively, is not retold in the Yuan dynasty material on Mongol history, although it is found in both the SHM and the Persian accounts (SHM, §§21, 76; Juvaini/Boyle 1958: 41-2, 593-4).

The Veritable Records of Chinggis Qan (extant today only in Chinese translation as the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親征錄, and in Rashid al-Din's Persian paraphrase), basically completed around 1286-1288, clearly reflected the new agenda in six important ways: 1) The family affair aspect of the dynastic rise was radically downplayed, leaving Chinggis Qan alone as the protagonist of the story.[14] The role of women, in particular, was minimized, although not eliminated entirely. 2) Likewise, the linearity of the narrative of dynastic rise was emphasized by implying far more continuity between the following of Yisügei and of his son Temüjin/Chinggis than allowed in the SHM. In the SHM, Yisügei is never specifically treated as a *qan*, and eventually his people all desert to follow the Tayichi'ud after his death. In the Veritable Records, however, Yisügei is treated as a ruler and Ö'elün succeeds, rather than fails, at stabilizing half of Yisügei's people after his death. Since the whole section on the

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[14] One should be careful, however, to take into account the differences of genre. The Veritable Records as a genre were focused on the emperor. But histories of his *nökör* were also being created, many of which appear in the obituary literature of the era, and some of which at least (such as that of Caγa'an) were also shared with the Mongols in the Middle East. So to a certain degree the foregrounding of Chinggis is not a result of a considered interpretation as it is of the conventions of the genre. The stories of the *qan*'s companions were being told, just not in that particular place. But as regards his family, there is little or nothing in the Yuan-era literature that continues the SHM's writings on either Ö'elün, Börte, or other women. In this case, the excision of the material appears to have not meant repackaging in a different format, but actual elimination.

conqueror's youth is eliminated, one moves directly from this incident to the battle in which Chinggis Qan has thirteen *küriyen*. No period of isolation as a single family is envisioned, and no capture by hostile groups occurs. 3) The role of Kitans and other defectors from the Jin dynasty, completely ignored in the SHM, was restored to its rightful place. By contrast, no official of 'Sarta'ul' or Turkestani origin is mentioned at all in the Veritable Records' section on Chinggis Qan. 4) Sigi Qutuqu's role in sedentary administration was restricted to the time of Ögedei, while Muqali's role as viceroy of North China under Chinggis Qan was restored to the historical record. 5) Ritual episodes, which in the SHM were linked everywhere to strange revelations and behavior not befitting a monarch, were eliminated, thus leaving the field clear for the Confucian ritual program. 6) A number of the unedifying episodes mentioned above were eliminated.

Thus, compared to the SHM, which was written from the more nativist point of view of the court of Möngke, the Veritable Records portrayed a significantly more Confucian Chinggis Qan. The long speeches describing Chinggis Qan's betrayal at the hands of Jamuqa were retained and even amplified, perhaps on the model of Liu Bang's long indictment of Xiang Yu's betrayal of his trust in Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* (Sima 1982: 8.376; Sima/Watson 1993: vol. 1, 72-3). These Veritable Records became also the basis for Rashid al-Din's history of Chinggis Qan. On some points the Muslim historian and his team used other traditions to revive the point of view of the SHM (which remained secret and inaccessible to non-Mongols). Tales of Sigi Qutuqu as an outstanding and fair judge and the wholesale massacre of the Tatars were restored in the biographies of the tribes, although not in the history of Chinggis (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 1, 47-8). Like Juvaini, Rashid al-Din mentions only the Khorazmian Mahmud Yalavac and never Yelü Chucai, and of course glories in the role of Muslim administrators in North China. But Rashid al-Din's history did not attempt to restore the high profile given to Börte and Ö'elün and gave only a bowdlerized version of the rape of Börte. Rashid al-Din was even more insistent that Yisügei was a real *qan* of the Mongols (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol.

1, 134, 131-2); in competition with other rulers, such as the Mamluks, the Mongols took great pride in the length of their lineage (see e.g. Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 646; and Aigle's essay in this volume) and evidently did not wish to see Chinggis' father deprived of a position in a continuous lineage of rulers, so unlike the succession of rival short-lived slave dynasties of Egypt and Delhi.

The Intermediate Class

If we ended the story here one could think that it is simply another example of the Mongols being assimilated by the people they conquered. The 'reversion' model of religious change and the rewriting of Mongol history could be simply a brilliantly clever way of getting the Mongols to *want* to be assimilated. But the full significance of this recasting of the relationship between conquered and conquerors only becomes clear when a third party is added to the story, what I call the 'intermediate class.'

In Mongol East Asia, this 'intermediate class' is the equivalent of the *semuren* 色目人 or 'people of various categories.' The *semuren* were between the Mongols on the top and those on the bottom, the native Han 漢 (subjects of the former Jin dynasty and Koreans) and the Southerners (subjects of the former Song dynasty). They were, however, closer to the Mongols in positions and prerogatives, having the right to bear arms, the right to hold positions as *daruɣaci* (government overseer), and so on. The *semuren,* as its name implies, was a diverse category. It included all immigrants from lands outside Mongol control (such as the Polos), and all non-Mongol immigrants from Mongol realms outside the Yuan. It also included a number of ethnic groups within the Yuan territory: Uyghurs, Naiman, Tuvans, Önggüd, Aryun, Tibetans, etc. (see the list in Tao 1997: 13). What united these people, besides being 'not Mongols' and 'not Han' (in the Yuan sense), was at least some degree of remove from the dominant religious system of the Han: Confucianism and the traditions of Chinese literacy. To be sure, many Uyghurs, Tanguts, and Önggüd would become staunch Confucians (see Chen 1966; Brose 2007). But the traditional authorities in their home societies as a whole were Buddhist or Christian. Many of these *semuren,* such as the Tibetans or Uyghurs, were Buddhist monks, while

Muslim and Christian clergy from the West serviced a tight network of their adherents. In addition to this, being immigrants within the Yuan heartland the wealth of such *semuren* officials must have been far more mobile and commercial, compared to the landed property prevalent among the Han upper class. Slave ownership, for example, was far more common among the Mongols and *semuren* than among the Han or Southerners (Hsiao 1978: 140, note 179).

The cohesion of the *semuren* category was amplified by their close involvement with the clergy and also with *ortoq* merchants who borrowed tax and tribute funds as capital and who in Mongol East Asia were almost exclusively of western origin. From the time of Chinggis Qan, clergy of designated religions (usually Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, and Islam) as well as *ortoq* merchants generally enjoyed a complex of rights that included the right to carry arms, use the post roads without cost, and avoid any tax and corvée obligations.[15] Indeed this bundle of privileges is known to have been enjoyed at certain periods by all western *semuren* (Uyghurs, Tanguts, and/or Muslims, Christians) regardless of their status, such as before 1231 and under Emperor Yisün Temür (1323-1328) (Su [1335] 1996: 77-8; Song 1976: 29.652; cf. Endicott-West 1989: 151). Not surprisingly, the categories of Muslim and/or Uyghur in Yuan legal literature seem to have been often confused, with clergymen on one hand and with *ortoq* merchants on the other. Indeed, clergymen conducted trade often enough that the practice had to be banned specifically during the Confucian reaction of 1330: 'When Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, Erke'ün [*yelikewen* 也里可溫; i.e. Christians], Juqud [*zhuhu* 朮忽; i.e. Jews], and Dasiman [*dashiman* 答失蠻; i.e. Muslim clergy] act as merchants, they shall pay customs in accordance with the old [i.e. Qubilaid] system' (Song 1976: 33.732).[16] This coming together of three legal categories –

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[15] For clergy, see Atwood 2004; Jackson 2005: 262-8; and Franke 1987: 315-18. For *ortoq* merchants, see Allsen 1989: 121-6; Endicott-West 1989: 142-6, 148, 150-2.

[16] Historical sources, written by those who detested the privileges granted these foreign usurers of alien religion, mention these blanket exemptions only when they are being criticized or curtailed. The

semuren, clergyman (especially of an alien religion), and merchant/usurer – created a particular type of elite. Even if not every *semuren* was an arms-toting *ortoq* merchant or clergyman of an exotic religion riding through the countryside on the official post-road, still *semuren* were much more likely to be part of the social network of those who fit these stereotypes.

While Ilkhanid law does not explicitly present any legal category exactly comparable to the *semuren*, one can see the same category at work implicitly in the Mongol Middle East. With the first conquest of Turkestan, the area was flooded by Chinese, Kitan, and Tangut administrators, craftsmen, and even farmers (Wang 1962: 327 [*Xi*, I, 51a]; cf. Li/Waley 1979: 93; Buell 1979). In conquered Iran, too, between the Mongols above and the Persian-speaking Sunni majority below were 'people of various categories.' These would include foreign scribes, clergy and merchants – Uyghur clerks, merchants, and *baqshi*, Kashmiri, Tibetan, and Chinese monks, and Frankish merchants (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 1, 6, 18-19, vol. 3, 667-8; Di Cosmo 2005: 399-400, 409-11) – as well as Muslim immigrants from Turkestan (e.g. Bar Hebraeus/Budge 1932: 433, 443, 463, 472). This class also included Christians – Armenian, Georgian, and Syriac – and Jews born within the Ilkhanate, with their strong professional and commercial networks. We know that the Chinggisid privileges for both clergy and *ortoq* merchants were applied in their full vigor in the Ilkhanate and that even the minimal restrictions on their tax-exemptions dating from the time of Möngke Qa'an had already lapsed by the reign of Abaya.[17] Similarly, the post of *daruyaci* (Persian *shahna*) appears to have been restricted under the Ilkhanate, just as under the Yuan dynasty, to Mongols and members of the 'intermediate class.'

The leading members of this intermediate class linked access to the Mongols' *ordo* as physicians, tutors, and the like,[18]

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repeated appearance of such criticisms, argues, however, that most of the time clergy, *ortoq* merchants, and much of the *semuren* community as a whole were tax exempt.

[17] See the Mongolian documents of Ardabil published in Doerfer 1975.

[18] E.g. Ghazan Qan's Chinese nurse and his Uyghur tutor; Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 590, 591.

with *ortoq* trading and often religious patronage. Kirakos Gandzakets'i's description of Simeon Raban Ata of Syria illustrates the synergy of sectarian religion with the funding opportunities and official protection given by the *ortoq* status:

> He was known as the father of the khan, since . . . in Tatar, *ata* means father. . . He approached the khan and beseeched him for a letter to give to his troops, commanding them not to kill innocent [Christian] men . . . With great pomp, the king sent Raban himself to his commanders with a written order that all obey his command. When Raban arrived, many things became propitious for the Christians, and the killings and captivity ceased. Likewise he built churches in Tajik cities, where previously no one dared utter the name of Christ – even in Tabriz and Nakhchevan . . . His merchants, [people] who had his *tamgha*, that is to say his insignia and letter, boldly circulated throughout the lands and no one dared approach those [merchants] who mentioned Raban's name [i.e. they were tax exempt]. Instead all the Tatar commanders gave him gifts from their booty [this describes *ortoq* investing] . . . He baptized many of the Tatars; and on account of his marvellous behavior and great honor, everyone was terrified of him (Kirakos/Bedrosian 1996: 238; cf. Allsen 1989: 115).

Likewise, the career of the Jewish Sa'd al-Dawla began with him as deputy *daruγaci* of Baghdad and wizard of taxation, passed through court physician, and ended with his brief rule as vizier and empire-wide patron of his Jewish co-religionists (see Rashiduddin/Thackston 1989-99: vol. 3, 567-8, 571-3, 575; Bar Hebraeus/Budge 1936: 478-9, 484-5, 490-1). The Turkestani immigrant Ali Ba'atur served as both Baghdad's *daruγaci* (Persian *shahna*), and the supervisor of the *ortoq* merchants and enslaved artisans (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 2, 499). More minor figures include the divan's multilingual translators and scribes from Khorazm and Kashghar listed in Ibn al-Fuwaṭî's biographical dictionary (DeWeese 2006: 23-6, 28) and the colorful Christian governors of the present-day Iraqi Kurdistan: the alchemist-bishop Henan Isho, the Assyrian merchant returned from China, Mas'ud Bar Qawti, and the Uyghur monk Yashmut (see Bar Hebraeus/Budge 1932: 443-4, 448, 456, 459-60, 462-4, 472, 480-1). Put together, these figures

were analogues of the *semuren* in the Yuan: a privileged class, much more numerous than the Mongols and with valuable financial and scribal skills, who served the Mongols in both practical and spiritual ways. Again, like the *semuren*, their wealth was much more mobile and commercial, their rise to power and riches more rapid, and their geographical horizons wider than those of the pre-conquest establishment.

One difference, however, between East Asia and the Middle East was that money-lending in the Mongol Middle East did not fall into the hands of the eastern immigrants, the way money lending was dominated by westerners in China. This was due to the geography of silver (the main precious metal under the Mongols), whose Eurasian supply moved from European mines through the Middle East to China, rather than the other way around (Watson 1967; Martinez 1990). But even without this advantage, borrowing on interest from official and *ordo* treasuries by local Muslims and non-Muslims alike was upsetting enough to the status hierarchies. One can see this contempt for the vulgarity of the scribal and financial classes through which the Mongols ruled, in both Juvaini (1958: I, 7, II, 525-46) and Rashid al-Din. Rashid al-Din wrote how:

> many lowly people and persons who had not a thing in God's world acquired great riches, repaid their loans, and joined the ranks of the wealthy. Suddenly they rode Arabian horses, wore kingly garments, possessed beautiful slave boys, and were surrounded by many bodyguards. They traveled with fully loaded camels and horses as they passed through the cities, streets, and markets. The people, amazed by them, asked 'How did they manage to get all this in such a short time?' When they learned how they got so rich, other beggars and bankrupts developed an irresistible urge to emulate them in that type of trade. Several thousand bankrupts, Muslims and Jews alike, hucksters and cherchis [peddlers] – that is, people who used to sell cumin, coriander, and gewgaws from sacks slung over their shoulders – weavers, and those who had never possessed two pennies to rub together – indeed who had never had enough to eat – took up the trade by borrowing money (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 737).

The sources of these funds were the Mongol rulers and nobility, mediated by the Uyghurs who dominated the scribal class and *ordo* administrations.

> Most of the people who gave money for interest during those times [before Ghazan Khan's prohibition of interest] were Mongols and Uyghurs. Of course, how can people who are slated for ill fortune prosper when they give money for interest? In the end they were unable to pay [back their investors], and their wives and children suffered humiliation when they were put in bondage. Thanks to the justice of the Padishah of Islam that humiliation was lifted from the people of Islam (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 3, 739).

As Rashid al-Din's readers knew, this corrupt form of commercial chicanery, so contrary to the image of the poor but virtuous Mongols under Chinggis Qan, was one which the Mongols had learned from their Uyghur clients. It was finally overthrown by the same ruler who overthrew the idolatry that had corrupted the primitive monotheism of the Mongols. Ghazan Qan's reign marked, at least in theory, not the assimilation of the Mongols by the Muslims, but an alliance of the established Muslim classes and the Mongol ruling class against the upsetting cosmopolitan entrepreneurship stimulated by Mongol rule. What happened to the intermediate class? Some Uyghurs would eventually take their place as Mongol nobles, while the *baqshi* would be sent home.[19]

This linking of overturned status hierarchies under Mongol rule with the humiliation of the majority religion and people was felt as keenly, if not more, by Confucians in the Yuan. Paul Smith's vivid study of the diaries of Kong Qi 孔齊 (1998) has illustrated the feelings of a world turned upside down in Yuan China, even among those who had no quarrel with living under a

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[19] The toleration of a dwindling number of Buddhist clergy under Ghazan Qan, after the first shock of persecution finished, is alluded to in Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 1, 6, 18-19, vol. 3, 652, 676. Prominent Uyghurs who became major emirs/*noyad* among the Mongols in the later Ilkhanate include Sewinc, Ögrenci and his son 'Ali, and Esen Qutluy and his son Mahmud (see Melville 1999: 44-5).

Mongol dynasty. As in the Middle East, flashpoints for communal violence were not lacking: Muslim endogamy, for example, was an outrage to Chinese ideas of right and wrong. Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 reported that when a wealthy Muslim family arranged a marriage with the groom's father's brother's daughter and celebrated it publicly, a riot broke out in the streets and a Chinese mob lynched the principals for publicly glorying in what the locals saw as incest (Tao 1997: 348). From the beginning, the Chinese Confucians in Mongol employ saw resisting the imposition of Turkestani methods of rule as the most urgent task. The biography of Yelü Chucai shows only the first of many such episodes:

> At the beginning of the dynasty, just as affairs were being pushed forward . . . the dynasty's ministers as a body desired to account every adult male as head of a separate household. Chucai alone thought that this was unacceptable. Everyone said, 'Whether it be our dynasty or the kingdoms in the West, there is none who does not take each adult male as head of a separate household. How can you reject the great dynasty's laws and instead follow the policies of the fallen empire?' Chucai said, 'Those in the Central Plains from ancient times have never once taken each adult male as head of a separate household. If you eventually do it that way, then a single year's tax can be collected, but after that people will just scatter in flight!' In the end, Chucai's opinion was adopted (Yelü 1986: 328).

Yelü's unnamed rival was the Khorazmian official Mahmud Yalavac, who at the beginning of Ögedei's reign was the great *daruyaci* in charge of Turkestani affairs. The difference between Chinese and Middle Eastern evaluations of the great Turkestani officials in North China is striking: while Mahmud Yalavac and Ahmad appear as noble, generous, and competent administrators in histories by Juvaini and Rashid al-Din, in East Asian sources they are both notorious for brutality and corruption.[20]

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[20] On Mahmud Yalavac, compare Juvaini/Boyle 1958: vol. 1, 97, vol. 2, 544, 570; with Song 1976: 158.3747 and 4.58. On Ahmad, compare

This same animosity undoubtedly underlay Zhang Dehui's recommendation to prince Qubilai for administration in North China:

> Nothing would be better than to choose instead a wise man of the clan, such as Kö'ün-Buqa, and have him handle the soldiers and from the meritorious elders choose someone like [Sigi] Qutuqu to rule the civil administration; then the whole world would receive the benefit of them! (Erdemtü 1994: 184, 102-3)

Sigi Qutuqu indeed had an unsavory reputation in North China (see e.g. Wang 1962: 490 [*Da*, 13b]; Song 1976: 157.3689), but for Zhang the most urgent need was to eliminate the Turkestani presence in the Mongol administration of North China. Once this was eliminated, then the traditional Mongol ruling class, re-envisioned as 'wise men of the clan' and 'meritorious elders,' could be won over directly to the Confucian way of administration. Indeed the racial animus against Westerners got to the point where as a prince Qubilai asked the scholar Li Ye 李冶:

> Question: 'May Turkestanis (*Huigu* 回鶻) be used as officials?'
> Answer: 'Among the Han, there are gentlemen and mean men. Among the Turkestanis as well there are gentlemen and mean men. But how they covet riches and relish profit! The incorrupt and reverential are few. Choose and employ only such within the house of state.' (Su [1335] 1996: 261).

In response, however, the *semuren* argued that corrupt as they were, at least they were loyal. When the Confucian Wang Wentong was executed for conspiracy to join his son-in-law Li Tan's rebellion, Yao Shu's biography says, 'The people of the West, having felt repressed by him, gathered at the palace gates in crowds and said, "Even though Turkestanis (*Huihui* 回回) sometimes embezzle the dynasty's money and goods, they have

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Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 2, 449-51 with Song 1976: 205.4558-64.

never yet dared to commit treason like this scholar (*xiucai* 秀才)!'" (Su [1335] 1996: 161).

In this issue, the *ortoq* or merchant partners were the acid test. This institution was well attested in the Chinggisid tradition; indeed in one *bilig* reported by Rashid al-Din, the conqueror holds up *ortoq* merchants as exemplars:

> Just as *ortaq* [merchants] come with gold-spun fabrics and are confident of making profits on those goods and textiles, military commanders should teach their sons archery, horsemanship, and wrestling well. They should test them in these arts and make them audacious and brave to the same degree that *ortaqs* are confident of their own skill (Rashiduddin/Thackston 1998-1999: vol. 2, 297).

By contrast, Yelü Chucai's paradigmatic biography begins the constant complaint in East Asian sources that the Turkestanis or 'Westerners' in China used the lending of silver to exploit the people. This was especially true of *ortoq* or partners borrowing money from the official treasury (e.g. Yelü Chucai 1986: 329-30, 330-1). As we have seen, Qoryosun, who at one time was working on the compilation of the Veritable Records, raised objection to the privileges held by the *ortoq*:

> On the day *ji/wei* 己未 [September 19, 1285], an imperial decree was issued to re-establish the Bureau of Market Taxes [Quanfusi, the office managing the loan of imperial funds to *ortoq* merchants], with the rank of 2b; Dashman was to administer it. Previously, given that wherever the merchants and peddlers of the Bureau of Market Taxes went, the officials gave them food and drink and dispatched troops as bodyguards, so that the hatred and suffering on the part of the civilians was truly inexpedient, Qorghosun memorialized that it be abolished. But on this day, Dashman memorialized that it be established again (Song 1976: 13.278; cf. Endicott-West 1989: 136-8).

(No doubt the co-religionists, kinsmen, and business associates of these 'merchants and peddlers' saw them quite differently, indeed in the same light as Kirakos saw Simeon Raban-Ata above.)

Qoryosun's successor as historian, Sarman, however, the one who actually completed the Veritable Records, stood out from his colleagues as a supporter of the *ortoq*, simply on the principle of being true to the Chinggisid legacy. In 1283, the Central Secretariat asked Sarman and 'Isa, the Syriac Christian translator, their opinion about the controversy over *ortoqs*. Their response was that:

> the words of these *ortoq* seem correct and they are the same as they were in the time of the emperor Chinggis. It has been this way up to the present. If at present there are such imperial decrees [prohibiting abuses] that have not yet been adhered to, then let them explain clearly to the people those regulations the substance of which have not been adhered to.[21]

In this case, Qubilai had grown tired of Confucian administration and overruled Qoryosun, but his descendants did not view *ortoq* so favorably. Two years after Qubilai's death, the Veritable Records for Ögedei, Möngke, and Qubilai were presented to the court. The emperor expressed annoyance both with their errors and also with certain 'minor things' included, both of which happened to involve the role of Westerners in the dynasty:

> On the day *yi/si* 乙巳 [November 30, 1296], Uru'udai and others present the Veritable Records of the Taizong 太宗 [Ögedei], the Xianzong 憲宗 [Möngke], and the Shizu [i.e. Qubilai Qan]. The emperor [Temür], said, 'Quturmishi was not the daughter of the Zhaorui Shunsheng Empress 昭睿順聖太后 [i.e. Chabi], so why is she still called a princess? When the Shunsheng Empress passed away, the Yuzong 裕宗 [i.e. Jingim, Temür's father] had already went back to the front; the dates and sequence which you recorded have discrepancies and errors. And the artillery man from

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Bemaristan named Ismayil,[22] the Bureau of Market Taxes – these are all minor things, why do you need to write about them?' (Song 1976: 19.407).

As a result of this intervention, the surviving text of what appear to be the Veritable Records of Ögedei indeed contain no mention, and those of Qubilai, remarkably little mention, of the *ortoq*. What was incompatible with the image of the Mongol founding as Confucian, and hence gave ammunition to the *ortoq*-sectarian religious side in their conflict with the Confucian agrarian position, would have to be written out of the history.

Conclusion

In this analysis, the 'Confucianization' or 'Islamization' of the early Mongols in the history writing of the period marks something more than just an attempt to assimilate the Mongols or a device for salving the pride of the conquered literati. It was also an invitation to the Mongol princes and nobles to 'revert' to their original, pure state before their corruption by the 'other' form of literate civilization represented by the 'intermediate class.' In this way, the representation of authentic Mongol power, once purged of (mostly Uyghur) corruption, as consistent with Confucian/Islamic truths was part of a strategy that bore fruit in the reign of Ghazan Qan in the Middle East and (less completely) in the restoration of 1328 in the Yuan dynasty.

At the same time, established members of the intermediate class, whether converted Jews like Rashid al-Din or Uyghur-Kitan hybrids like Lian Xixian 廉希憲 (nicknamed Lian Mencius by Qubilai; see Brose 2007), were often ready to reinvest, figuratively and literally, in the more stable land-holding values held by the traditional agrarian upper class. As John Dardess has noted about the Yuan in his *Conquerors and Confucians*, the politics of Mongol rule were never simply ethnic, pitting one ethnic group against another; rather they were always about particular styles of rule that suited particular modes of status

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[22] Bemaristan (or Bimaristan; Ch. Biemalisidan 別馬里思丹) is the Persian for hospital and is used in some cases to designate quarters in urban areas in the Middle East.

maintenance and improvement (1973: 35). Uncontrolled and anti-social upward mobility by alien Muslim merchants or Tibetan clerics was one thing, but the upward mobility of young, relatively low-born Mongols, Qipchaqs, or Qarluqs through mastery of the Confucian classics in the examination system: that was quite another.

How effective this invitation to the Mongol aristocrats to 'revert' to monotheism and pure ritual simplicity was remains unclear, however. The Yuan court remained at least partly open to *semuren* throughout its existence, and while the Mongol rulers in the Middle East repudiated their 'intermediate class' clients more decisively than in East Asia, remnants of them remained at least until 1319 (Melville 1997). Perhaps the most eloquent testimony to the Mongols' unwillingness to ever fully accept their destiny as Confucian/Islamic landlords is the preservation of *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Unretouched, undoctored, and kept from the eyes of non-Mongol officials like Rashid al-Din or Yu Ji and Zhao Shiyan, this 1252 text written during the nativist revival under Möngke gave the high Mongol princes and nobles a thoroughly unreconstructed representation of the roots of their continuing power.

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Chapter 4

*Rivalry Between Mongols And Tayiči'ut For Authority: Kiyat-Borjigin Genealogy**

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Many scholars see the formation of the Mongol empire as a process in which the Mongols conquer various nomadic groups and polities, the most important being the Kereyit, the Merkit and the Naiman. This may help us to better understand the entity usually referred to as 'Mongols' at that time. Following native traditions, researchers define the boundaries of the community 'Mongols' with the ethnonyms and eponyms designating the descendants of the forebears Börte Činua and Гооа Maral. I would like to stress that, actually, this community had a dual structure in which the names of the forefathers represented two different ethnic components – the Tayiči'ut and the Mongols. It was precisely these two leading groups that determined the process of politogenesis in the Three River region (Onon, Kerülen, Tula – a territory of secondary colonization) in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The mutual relations of these two groups were ambivalent. On the one hand, they were

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* Adapted by Roberte Hamayon, Isabelle Charleux and Christopher Atwood. For sake of clarity, we standardized the author's transliteration of Mongol names on the model of that of Rachewiltz (2004), whose translation is quoted throughout this chapter. We replaced Rashīd al-Dīn's Russian translation (*Sbornik letopisei* [The Collected Chronicles], Moscow and Leningrad, 1952), quoted by the author, with Thackston Wheeler's translation (1998-1999), but two occurrences could not be found.

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marriage partners, i.e. affines. On the other hand, throughout this entire period they were rivals in the struggle for power in the region.

The meaning of the well-known names of what Igor de Rachewiltz calls 'the partly mythical ancestors of the Mongqol (mo. Mongɣol) tribe and its various branches or clans (*oboq*, mo. *oboɣ*)' (Rachewiltz 2004: 221) is still the subject of discussions among Mongolists. In his last work, I. de Rachewiltz examines the results of previous investigations and proposes his own interpretation:

> The blue-grey, or bluish, wolf (*börte činō*; mo. *börte činua*) and the fallow doe (*qo'ai maral*; pmo. *qoɣa[i] maral*; mo. *quua/quuva/qua maral*) in the early legend of Mongol origins are real animals, as in the mythology of the ancient Turks whose totemic ancestor was likewise a wolf. However, in the later Mongol tradition they became a human couple: Börte Činua and Гооа Maral, i.e. Blue-grey Wolf and Beautiful (reading *ɣooa* 'fair, beautiful' for *qoɣa*, etc. 'fallow') Doe (Rachewiltz 2004: 224).

Without rejecting the above mentioned translations, I want to propose my own understanding of these names.

First of all, we should reconsider the genealogy that was reconstructed after *The Secret History of the Mongols*, and set apart those from among Chinggis Qan's ancestors who were married couples. Here they are:

> §1. *At the beginning* there was a blue-grey wolf, born with his destiny *ordained* by Heaven Above. His wife was a fallow doe [...].
>
> §3. The son of Qarču, Borjigidai Mergen, had as wife Mongqoljin Qo'a. The son of Borjigidai Mergen, Toroqoljin Bayan, had a wife *named* Boroqčin Qo'a [...].
>
> §9. ...This is how Dobun Mergen asked there and then for Alan Qo'a, daughter of Qorilartai Mergen of the Qori Tumat born at Ariq Usun, and how he took her as his wife.
>
> §10. ...she bore him two sons who were Bügünütei and Belgünütei. (Rachewiltz 2004: 1-3).

As I have already argued, scholars consider that these names refer to Mongol totemic forefathers; practically all of them translate the second component of these names as an animal's designation (wolf and doe) and the first one as an attribute (color – bluish/fallow – or quality – beautiful). In my opinion, both components should be translated as animals insofar as, traditionally, the same basic concepts were very often expressed by words belonging to different languages (of the Tungus-Manchu and Turkic families), which were then joined together in the process of naming newly formed political units.[1]

The wolf as a founder-forefather or hero is a rather widespread archetype of traditional culture, and not only in East Eurasia (Karpov 1996: 151–2). Often, only the attribute 'grey' suffices to designate it. In connection with this, let us examine the lexem *bor*, which is used both in the name of the mythical forefather and in the ethnonym *Borjigin*. It is one among several variants within the Altaic linguistic family: in Turkic and Mongol *bor/boro* means 'grey,' and *boro/buru*(*t*) can designate a wolf (Sevortyan 1978: 171–3, 193).

One can conventionally speak of the 'mixing up' of two lexical bases: *bor* 'chalk' and *bor* 'grey color,' *boz* 'grey,' 'whitish,' 'gleaming or shimmering white.' Such 'mixing up' is expressed in the forms *bora/boro* and there are similar mixed forms with *boz* 'grey' (Sevortyan 1978: 193).

The lexeme *boz – bor – boro* is distributed in the area of all Altaic languages. And as V. I. Abayev thinks, it goes back to an old substrate Eurasian word (Sevortyan 1978: 173).

The examples given here by the composer demonstrate the interchangeability of the words (Sevortyan 1978: 171–3).

The meaning of the first forefather's name is rather transparent – *Börte Činua = Wolf Wolf*, the first part expressed in

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[1] The use of two words of different origins was typical of the period of formation of the Mongol Ulus. In a previous work, I argued that *ulus* and *irgen* were synonymous, as well as *jarliq* and *jasaq*, etc., the first word being in each case Turkic and the second Tungus-Manchu. Both words could be used together as well as separately (Skrynnikova 1997: 25-6, 44, 53-4).

Turkic and the second in Mongolian (Tungus-Manchu). I've also noticed this usage of double name in the Russian fairy tale *Sivka Burka*, where the horse's name meant the same: *Grey-Grey*, i.e. *Wolf-Wolf* (Skrynnikóva 2001: 171–86). Actually, among all Tungus-Manchu languages the word *činukai – wolf* has survived only in Evenk, and even then only in some vernaculars: the Ayan vernacular of the eastern dialect, Erbogočen vernacular of the northern dialect and the Tikma vernacular of the southern dialect (Cincius 1977, II: 396).

Let us note that in this case the genealogy is built according to the patrilineal descent principle. But we know that Chinggis Qan, the founder of the Mongol empire, is the descendant of Bodončar who was born to Alan Qo'a after her husband's death. Moreover, in *The Compendium of Chronicles* it is also emphasized that only those descendants of Alan Qo'a who were born after Dobun Mergen's death can be regarded as real Mongols, *nirun* (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 26). I. de Rachewiltz translated the corresponding passage in the *SHM*: 'After his death, Alan Qo'a, although she had no husband, bore three sons who were named Buqu Qatagi, Buqatu Salji and Bodončar Mungqaq' (Rachewiltz 2004: 3-4), which interrupts descent through ancestors in the male line, since Börte Činua and Гooa Maral are the ancestors only of Alan Qo'a's deceased husband, not of Alan Qo'a or her miraculously conceived sons. At this point, then, the name 'Mongol' was conveyed through the female descent line. However, insofar as the patrilineal system of kinship later became predominant, it was necessary to bind the descendants of the male line to the genealogical tree of Börte Činua. The tie of Chinggis Qan to the clan of the wolf is thus reconstructed through the myth of the yellow dog as being the shape taken by a 'celestial' man with whom Alan Qo'a had her three youngest sons. In addition, we must remember that the most important marker for the ruling elite, *Kiyat*, also refers to Alan Qo'a, and the first mention of the ethnonym Mongol is also connected with the female line in the name *Mongoljin Qo'a*.

The Secret History of the Mongols and *The Compendium of Chronicles* do not contradict each other regarding the basic events of Mongolian history. Both texts stress that Alan Qo'a had a *yellow dog* father her last three sons, which testifies to

their select status and thus contributes to build the genealogy on patrilineal descent: '§21. ...Every night, a resplendent yellow man entered by light of the smoke-hole or the door top of the tent, he rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed, he crept out on a moonbeam or ray of sun in the guise of a yellow dog' (Rachewiltz 2004: 4). Thus, we can speak of another married couple: *a dog – Alan Qo'a*. Such names of married couples, undoubtedly of symbolic character, are very interesting to analyze and interpret.

Thus, *The Secret History of the Mongols* mentions animals – wolf (Börte Činua, Borjigidai) and dog (the yellow dog) – among Chinggis Qan's patrilineal ancestors. Dog and wolf, of course, belong to the same category. Their images are, in fact, interchangeable in ethnographic data and folklore and are not rigidly separated: the theme of a wolf-god (or divine canine) protecting human unions is widespread.

Let us also remember Rashīd al-Dīn's frequent mention of the ancestral relationship between Tayiči'ut, *nukuz*[2] (pl. of *noqai* – dog), and Činua. An example is when he speaks of the clan 'Chinas, also called Nüküz' (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 26). The identity of the Tayiči'ut is modeled on different codes: data about *nukuz* is found in the section about the Tayiči'ut; in one case the tribe Činua is called a part of the Tayiči'ut tribe, in the other cases, the Činua are presented as the ancestors of the Tayiči'ut tribe (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 26, 102). Moreover, Tayiči'ut fits in this series, thanks to the Turkic root *taiči/toiči*: in the Altaic epic the name of the hero is Ak-Toiči, 'White Wolf.'[3] Thus we can say with some confidence that, in our sources, Chinggis Qan's patrilineal ancestors are called different names (Börte Činua – Borjigin – Nukuz/Noqai – Činua – Tayiči'ut = wolf/dog), which all mark the identity of a wide commonality known as Tayiči'ut.

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[2] *Noqot* is the plural of *noqai*, according to I. de Rachewiltz. C. Atwood proposes that *nukuz* is here a rendition of the word Negüs, which is the 'opposite' of Kiyat/Borjigit being the non-ruling lineages. Nukuz is probably, however, a bad reading. Rachewiltz mentions Negüs, brother of To'oril, in *The Secret History* §218 (Rachewiltz 2004: 149).

[3] Another etymology could be Chinese *taizi* 太子, 'prince,' here 'the princes' (C. Atwood, personal communication).

Can we define the ethnic membership of the Tayiči'ut's marriage partners (Börte Činua – Borjigin – Nukuz/Noqai – Činua)? Let us remind that the ethnonym 'mongol' in *The Secret History of the Mongols* is mentioned for the first time in the name of Mongqoljin-Qo'a,[4] who was the wife of Borjigidai. This fact explicitly points to the role that matrilateral kinship, which actually coexisted with the patrilineal system, played a role in the identification practices of medieval Mongols. Thus, there were marriage ties between the *Borjigin* (Tayiči'ut) and *Mongol* clans. Inasmuch as Mongolian medieval marriages were exogamic, it is impossible to include the Borjigin clan into the Mongol tribe.

Гооа/Qo'a is a component of the name given to the wife of Börte Činua, Гооа Maral, and then of the names of wives of their early male descendants (Alan-Qo'a, Mongqoljin-Qo'a, Boroqcin-Qo'a). The meaning of this term is of great interest to understand the role of matrilineal kinship. The second component of the name Гооа Maral is the well-known word *maral*, which in Turkic means deer. The name Mongoljin Qo'a, 'Mongol woman-she deer,' certainly expands the limits of the series. Considering these implicit data, we may conclude with a high degree of reliability that Kiyat, Qo'a ('doe') and Mongol are synonymic. More importantly, the ethnonym Mongol is passed on along the female line.

Now, references to transmission through females are not confined to the implicit data of *The Secret History*. The text of *The Compendium of Chronicles* is a convincing example of medieval identification practices:

> The first section is on those who are called Dürlükin Mongols. They are the various branches and clans that were born from the lineage of the remainder of the Nüküz clan[5] and Qiyan Mongols tribe that had gone into Ärgänä-qun[6] and existed before the time of Dobun Bayan and Alan Qo'a.

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[4] 'Mongqoljin-Qo'a is the Mongγoljin Гооа of AT [Altan Tobči]' (Rachewiltz 2004: 239) (Note of the editors).
[5] [Negüs in *The Secret History*] (Note of the editors).
[6] Ergene Qun according to Rachewiltz (2004: 232-3), i.e. the Argun River (Note of the editors).

The second section is on those who are called Niru'un Mongols.[7] They are the tribes descended from Alan Qo'a after the death of her husband, Dobun Bayan. Alan Qo'a was from the Qorolas tribe, which is a branch of the Dürlükin Mongols. According to the Mongols she became pregnant from light after the death of her husband, and three sons were born. Those who have descended from those sons are called the Niru'un. The world *niru'un* means pure loins and is a reference to the pure line that came into existence from light. The clans that stem from Alan Qo'a and her sons comprise three divisions.

The first in the one descended from Alan Qo'a down to the sixth descendant, Qabul Khan. All these, their sons, grandsons, and families, are called Niru'un without qualification. Qabul Khan's brothers and their families are also called Niru'un.

The second, although they are Niru'un, are called Qiyat, and they are the group descended from Qabul Khan in the sixth generation of descent from Alan Qo'a.

The third, although they are Niru'un and Qiyat and descended from Alan Qo'a, and they are also descended from her sixth descendant, Qabul Khan, are called Qiyat Borjiqin. They are all descended from Qabul Qan's grandson, Yesügäi Bahadur, Genghis Khan's father (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 79).

This text reflects the actual role of both types of descent systems: matrilineal, through the emphasis on the importance of descending from Alan Qo'a (the Nirun are the purest Mongols); and patrilineal, through the singling out of Qabul Qan, whose genealogy is based on the elder son's right to inherit power, starting from Bodončar (Alan Qo'a's youngest son).

The third element to stress in analysis of this passage is that the ethnonym Kiyat is attached to Qabul Qan's line: while all the descendants of Alan Qo'a are called Nirun and Kiyat, these names are also applied to Qabul Qan and his first line of descendants. And it was from this putative ancestor of the Kiyat tribe, Qabul Qan, that the Mongols derived their identity and authority. Accordingly, the ethnonym Kiyat became particularly

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[7] *The Secret History* gives "Nirun" (Rachewiltz 2004) (Note of the editors).

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meaningful at the time of foundation of the Mongol empire by Chinggis Qan.

Finally, let us note the mention of the double ethnonym, Kiyat-Borjigin (see below), which can reflect a reinforced alliance between the two sides under the leadership of the first, and which correspond to another ethnonym: Mongol-Tayiči'ut. Thus we can evaluate the two basic elements of this practice of identification. In the first one, the ethnic boundaries are underlined: they are Mongols in general, but they are also Dürlükin. In the second one, another ruling elite is selected: it descends not from Börte Činua in the male line, but through females (Nirun); and in its framework, in turn, the marker of the ruling line, Kiyat, which is attached to Chinggis Qan and his descendants, is passed on through the elder sons. If Qabul Qan is called the forefather of the Kiyat tribe, then his sons and grandsons become forefathers of its subdivisions, with the addition of a second element: Kiyat-Yürki, Kiyat-Qorolas, Kiyat-Borjigin, etc. We can probably say that the importance of the union formed under the rule of Qabul Qan was based on the selection of his line as a leading one through the use of a glorious name from the past, Kiyan.

The Compendium of Chronicles often refers to Qabul Qan: 'Qabul Qan was Genghis Khan's great grandfather ... His children and grandsons are named Qiyat' (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 126). Rashīd al-Dīn also reconstructed the genealogic tree starting from Qabul Qan:

> His eldest son was Ökin Borqaq [...] he died young. He [Ökin] had a son named Sorqadu Yürki, and his grandson was Sacha Beki. All the Ürkin Qiyat descended from him. [...] The second son [of Qabul Khan] was Bartan Bahadur, Genghis Kan's grandfather [...]. The fourth son was Qada'an Bahadur [...]. The sixth son was Tödö'än Otchigin[8] (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 126-7).

We may presume that Qabul Qan is at the root of the rise of the Kiyat (= Mongols) and of the securing of their power on a

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[8] According to *SHM* §48 (Rachewiltz 2004: 10), Tödö'en otčigin was the seventh son (Note of the editors).

territory, which they had newly colonized. Not only have all Mongols chosen him as *qan*, but also the power structure that formed then stressed the emergence of a throne (patrimonial hearth), which the first mention of the word *otčigin*, 'keeper of the patrimonial hearth,' at that time seems to confirm. For this reason we should pay attention to the connection of the ruling elite with the mother clan Qorolas and its nomad territory, insofar as the matrilineal principle stating that nephews inherit from their maternal uncle on the mother's side is reflected in the following citation from Rashīd al-Dīn. Here the lands of the Qorolas are referred to as their own ... and the Qorolas as Kiyat: 'Subsequently Qada'an Bahadur and Qutula Khan have separately left for their yurtas (territories – T.S.) in the lands of Qorolas tribe.'[9] And here they are called the Kiyat-Qorolas tribe.

It is precisely this mechanism of transfer of authority and power which is definitely emphasized in *The Compendium of Chronicles:*

> [...] After that, Alan Qo'a's descendant in the sixth degree, Qabul Khan, produced sixth sons. Since they were all warriors of great importance and princes, the Qiyat epithet was reapplied to them. From that time some of [Qabul Khan's] sons and progeny have been called Qiyat. In particular, the sons of one of his sons, Bartan Bahadur by name, who was Genghis Khan's grandfather, have been called Qiyat. (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 81).

The matrilineal descent principle is archetypical among the Mongols and the Turks. S. Klyaštornyi wrote: 'The Turkic genealogic tradition testifies that Ašina was the clan name of the mother of the tribe's founder. Another variant of this tradition points to the local, eastern Turkestani origin of the leader of the Ašina, on his mother's side or through a female line. As S. V. Kiselëv has already noted, any mention on the passing on of a name from the mother's side or through a female line deserves 'special trust' (Klyaštornyi 2003: 158). S. P. Tolstoy considers the Turkic practice called *kukburi* (*kokpari, kokpar*: 'tearing off a

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[9] This citation could not be found in Thackston's English version (Note of the editors).

goat's skin') in Central Asian Turkic wedding rituals as the expression of a ritual fight between the marriage partners Blue Wolf and Goat (quoted after Ermolenko 1998: 57-8).

The names of Alan Qo'a's sons, Buqu Qatagi and Buqatu Salji, appear to be relevant to this context: *buqu* and *buqa* mean 'he-deer,' which suggests that they are ascribed to their mother's line.[10]

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[10] There are many examples of Buqu or Buqa as a component of a name: §§59, 137, 202, 226, as well as its incorporation into the names of two of Alan Oo'a's sons from the 'heavenly' man – Buqu Qatagi and Buqatu Salji. The ancient groups that became primogenitors (Qatagin and Salji'ut) contain only the second part of names. In my opinion, the first part of these names – in this case, Buqu or Buqa – marked correlation with a totem, taking into consideration the sacralized character of animals in *The Secret History* and their connection with ritual activities in a sacred place.

It is well-known that in traditional cultures the way an animal traces its path is of great importance since it makes this path sacred and following its tracks foretells good luck. In *SH* §103, Chinggis Qan says: '...I climbed the Burqan... following dear (*buqu*) tracks' (Rachewiltz 2004: 33). The terms *buqu* and *buqa* are probably synonyms; this could be supposed on the base of the contents of §240: '*Then going* by paths trodden by the red bull *hula'an buqa*' (Rachewiltz 2004: 165). I. de Rachewiltz proposes his interpretation of the expression *hula'an buqa*, lit. 'red bull (or ox)': 'In my view there are only two possibilities: the Manchurian red deer (*Cervus elaphus xanthopygos*) and the larger elk (*Alces alces*), both common in the Barguzin district, a fact recorded even by Marco Polo' (Rachewiltz 2004: 861).

In *SH* §§12–16, we read that Dobun Mergen [...] met a man of the Uriangqai tribe who had killed a three-year-old deer and was roasting his ribs and entrails. Dobun Mergen said 'Friend, share the quarry.' 'I will give it to you,' said *the man* and keeping for himself the main portion *of the animal* which has the lungs and the skin he gave all the meat [...] to Dobun Mergen (Rachewiltz 2004: 3). *Jildü or jügeli* are the ritual parts of an animal, which were preserved to be used for sacrifice on the mountain top. A *züheli [jügeli]* ritual was performed for kind deities that are 'on the right side' (Hangalov 1958: 515). '*Züheli* means the head, four extremities, the skin and tail of the sacrificial animal separated from the trunk, similarly to a stuffed animal, and set up on a birch staff fixed with its butt-end in the ground; the head,

If the Mongolian women – the wives of the Tayiči'ut – are referred to as 'she-deers,' then how were the Mongol men named? The fact that boys and girls born in the same social circle belong to different groups is widespread: 'New-born boys become dogs while girls become human beings' (E Lung-li 1979: 328). Can we then suppose that the name Mongol is an encrypted designation of a totemic animal? We have shown above that wolf and dog were synonyms in the Tayiči'ut's military union. Can we consider that their clan name as marriage partners (*buqu, buqa* as 'bull' or 'he-deer') is synonymous to their designation as the military union of bears?

In my opinion, there exists implicit data that allow us to suppose a connection between the Mongols and their designation as bears, which can be interpreted as symbolizing a military union. Taking into account their relationships, it is possible to interpret Mongolian ethnonyms on the basis of comparison of those tongues. N. B. Dašieva has noted the existence of a common root *mang-*, 'bear,' in the languages of Tungus-speaking of the Amur basin peoples, 'who call the river Amur Mangu, and use *manguni* as the correlated adjective.' In A. V. Smolyak's opinion, this is related 'to the name of the bear-ancestor Mangi' (Dašieva 2001: 133).

As to the etymology of the root *mang/mangu*, N. C. Munkuev wrote, citing A. Mostaert: 'Meng-gu, as we know, is only a transcription of the word "Mongol," as a tribe's name [...] Mongγol is probably an ancient form of plural with the ending "l"' (*Mengda beilu* 1975: 90).[11] In this case, both the ethnonym *menggu* known from the Chinese historiographical tradition and the name *mongγol* can be translated as '[those who are called]

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decorated with multi-colored tapes, with the fire bark squeezed in teeth happened to be directed with a muzzle towards sunrise' (Manžigeev 1978: 55–6).

Traces of matrilineal kinship relationship (inheritance from the maternal uncle – *naqaču*) were kept among Mongol-speaking peoples down to the 20th century.

[11] On this question, see also Rachewiltz 1996: 199-200, quoting Pelliot and Serruys. These authors also mention such a possible connection with the Tungus and Shiwei, a people of mixed Mongol and Tungus cultures.

bears.' On the other hand, N. B. Dašieva considers that this ethnonym most probably results from the combination of two words: *Mang-*, 'bear,' and *gol*, 'river' (Dašieva 2001: 133). In the latter hypothesis, the ethnonym would mean: '[those who are living on] the river of bears'; this river would be the Amur. The fact that the Amur territory corresponds to the area of the initial settlement of the Mongols allows us to assume that the suggested interpretation is correct: the name of the people is related to an ethnonym of Tungus-Manchu origin meaning 'bear.' More broadly, what it signifies is the codification of the men's military union of Bears.

This hypothesis is implicitly confirmed by what follows: we know that Qutula Qan was the third ruler of all Mongols, and that all Mongols and Tayiči'ut took part in his enthronement (*SH* §57). I do not think that the comparison given by Rashīd al-Dīn is fortuitous, since both groups are explicitly mentioned: Mongols (Bears) and Tayiči'ut (Wolves). While preparing for the war against the Merkit and being in the center, Qadan says:

> I have [my] senior brother Ba'adur, Qutula Khan by name, on the left wing [it was written earlier that Qutula Khan was on the right wing and this is more likely. – T.S.] ... from the force of his hand the paw of a three-year-old bear [...] weakens. And on the left wing I have the matchmaker, [*quda*] by name Ariq Cine [Činu-a/Čino]; when he hunts in a dense wood he catches a grey wolf by its paw and strikes [him] to the ground.[12]

The military principle is stressed in the names of commonalities, for it indicates the value of a military team in a union that should combine unity (based on intermarriage relations, *anda quda*) and difference: Mongols 'bears' and Tayiči'ut 'wolves.' In my opinion, N. B. Dašieva's interpretation

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[12] This citation could not be found in Thackston's English version. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 129 has: '[Qutula Khan] his hands resembled a bear's claws'; and p. 131: 'Qutula Khan's wife said: "Qutula Khan is he of whom they have said [...] his hand is like a three year-old bear's claw".' 'Ariq Cine' is not in Thackston's index (Note of the editors).

is worthy, as it is built not only on a formal lexical basis but also it is in keeping with traditional culture.

In connection with these questions, let us consider the figure of a metal pendant fixed on shaman dress from the Upper-Amur Evenks-Orochons discussed by Mazin (Mazin 1984: 14-15): it features a creature with a bear's head and wings in the back. This combination of different totemic animals can refer to some sacralized ancestor. This might, for instance, refer to Yisügei, Chinggis Qan's father. The bear was a symbol of wide military union of the Mongols, and the white gerfalcon *šonqor*, seen by Dei Secen in a dream, inspires him to comment that it is a good omen: 'the august spirit (*sülde* T. S.) [*sülder*, Rachewiltz 2004: 328] of you, Kiyat people' (*SH* §63; Rachewiltz 2004: 14). Now, the Mongol Yisügei is, first of all, a Kiyat:

> During this period his father, Tesügäi Bahadur, was [...] a mighty and prosperous ruler of his people. Most of the Qiyat and Niru'un clans, to which they belonged, as well as other Mongols, were his followers (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 285).

The clan name could be a part of the personal name of the group's leader. Thus, the Tatars whom he met after he had left Temüjin with his new wife called him 'Yisügei-Kiyan' (Rachewiltz 1972: 26).

I believe that using eponymous names was a widespread practice in medieval Mongolia. In order to legitimate the power of Chinggis Qan and his descendants, it is in his genealogy – rather than in that of Bodončar's elder descendants' line – that his relations to his ancestors are implicitly mentioned by reproducing ethnonyms. An example of this is the name of Mönggetü Kiyan (Rachewiltz 1972: 21), the eldest son of Bartan Ba'atur, Chinggis Qan's grandfather; Mönggetü Kiyan was thus Yisügei Ba'atur's elder brother and Chinggis' uncle. Let us read what is written in the genealogical table that represents Bartan Ba'atur and his children, under the name of his elder son Mönggetü Kiyan:

> All Kiyat come from the descendants of this Mönggetü Kiyan. He was given this name for the reason that he was a

great *ba'atur* [warrior] since the word Kiyan means violently flowing stream in Mongol.[13]

The ethnonym Kiyat becomes the leading one in the construction of genuine Mongolness: 'the Nirun, who are also called Kiyat.' The importance of this union formed under Qabul Qan's power is evidenced by the fact that his line was marked as leading through a famous name of the past. In the genealogical table of Qabul Qan and his wife, near the name of his grandson Sorqatu Jürki [Yürki][14] it is written that a tribe Kiyat-Yürki is his *uruq*, and near the name Saĉa Beki, 'a part of the tribe Kiyat Yürkin is his *uruq*.' The descendants of Qabul Qan's third son, Qutuqtu-Mönggür/Möngler (Qutuqtu Münggür in Rashīd al-Dīn), were also a part of the Kiyat (Qiyat) tribe (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 126). The variant Möngler (Rachewiltz 2004: Table 1) of the name of Qabul Qan's third son who was the younger in his right wing, confirms the identity of Mongols and Kiyat. While the ethnonym Yürki/Jürki was transferred through the senior branch of Qabul Qan's descendants, a second ethnonym, Kiyat, was attributed to it. This is the way the Mongolian identity was constructed:

> [...] the Niru'un who are called Qiyat and consist of two branches, (1) the 'real' Qiyat, the Yürkin, Changshi'ut, and Qiyat Sayar, and (2) the Qiyat who are the Borjiqin, which means dark-eyed, and the branches of whom began with Genghis Khan's father and who are attributed to his family and that of his father (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 26).

Accordingly, the ethnonym Kiyat becomes particularly valued during the creation of the Mongol empire by Chinggis Qan. Chinggis Qan divided his army into thirteen *küriyen*

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[13] We could not found the exact citation in Thackston's translation. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 80 has: 'In the Mongolian language *qiyan* is a strong torrent that tumbles down from the mountain to the ground and is swift, fast and powerful' (Note of the editors).

[14] Jürki and Yürki are alternative readings of the same name. The *Secret History* has Yürki (§49). (Note of the editors.)

[güre'en] [15] (nomadic camps) before fighting against Jamuqa. The description of these *küriyen* (*gürä'än*) mentions the Kiyat (Qiyat) in the fourth *küriyen*, together with the Nirun (Niru'un); in the fifth, sixth and seventh *küriyen* were the sons of Sorqatu Jürki (Sorqoqtu Yürki), Sača Beki (Sacha Beki), Taiču (Taichu) as well as the Kiyat-Jürkin (Yürkin Qiyat) tribe belonging to the posterity of Sorqatu Jürki (Sorqoqtu Yürki) (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 161). Interestingly, Bartan Ba'atur is designated by the name Kiyan (Qiyan: Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 81) and this ethnonym is fixed in the names of his descendants: his elder son, Mönggetü Kiyan [16] the head of the right wing, and Yisügei Kiyan, the head of the left wing.

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[15] 'A *gürä'än* means a ring, and in olden times when a tribe encamped in a place in a circle with the chief in the middle, they called it a *gürä'än*. It is also used when an enemy approaches and they camp in this fashion so that strangers and enemies cannot get in' (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 160). (Note of the editors.)

[16] During the process of founding the Mongoljin Ulus Chinggis Qan said 'to steward *[bawurči]* Önggür, [...] son of Mönggetü Kiyan [...] When you [Önggür and Boro'ul – T. S.] take your seats, you must sit so as to look after the food on the right and the left sides of the large kumis pitchers. Sit with Tolun and the others on the centre *of the tent*, facing north' (*SHM* §213, Rachewiltz 2004: 144-5). I think that the given text presents the ritual function of these people, which is proved by the listed attributes that are usually used in a sacrificial ceremony. They are placed in front of the performers of the ceremony who are turned towards the south, in the following way: a *sa'uri* to which Tolun is related and which can be interpreted as a throne, and a sacred vessel, *yeke tüsürge*, from which koumiss is sprayed and distributed during the ceremony. Probably, the *yeke tüsürge* is analogue to the *boro öndür*, a ritual vessel for koumiss, the central attribute in the ceremony of the worship of Chinggis Qan's *sülde* in Ejen Qoriya.

Tolun was the son of Father Mönglik (see next footnote) of the Qongqotan (Rashid-ad-din 1956b: 176, 268), which explains his central position (*tolun-tan-lu'a tüblen sa'utuqai*) while Önggür and Boro'ul take up positions on the right and to the left sides of *yeke tüsürge*. The center (*töb*) where Tolun and his assistants Önggür and Boro'ul are located, is related to the *sa'uri*, which can be of sacral value as a burial place of placenta. Barguzin and Selenga Buryats used to perform the ceremony *hüürida mürgehe* (worshipping of placenta) on the place where placenta was buried (Buryat *hyypu* = *sa'uri*) (Basaeva 1991: 70).

Let us return to the understanding of the name Mönggetü Kiyan. Referring to his predecessors' researches, Igor de Rachewiltz interprets the first part as '"Who Has Beauty Spots (or Moles)." *Möngge* = mo. *mengge* "beauty spot, mole, birthmark"' (Rachewiltz 2004: 291).[17] In my opinion, there could have been an inversion of vowels, which is often found in traditional cultures. In the Chinese transcription, the ethnonym Mongol is known as Menggu, perhaps based on *möngge* or *müngge*, and the affix *-tü (= tai)* marks the possessive case in Mongolian. Thus, the name Mönggetü Kiyan means 'Holds Mongol Kiyan.'[18]

We can see the same stem *meng/möng* in the name Mönglik, which we may understand as Mönggetü because *-lik* is similar to *-tü (= tai)*: 'Mönglik's name, of Turkic origin, means "Who Has Beauty Spots (or Moles)."' (Rachewiltz 2004: 340). I think that it would be more correct to understand Mönglik as 'Who holds Mongols,' which is also suggested by his designation as 'Father Mönglik,' a traditional mark of seniority or ancestrality (Rachewiltz 2004: 17, 340; *SH* §69).[19] The above mentioned Qutuqtu-Mönggür/Möngler could be added to this list.

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[17] Rashīd al-Dīn also writes : 'Bartan Bahadur's eldest son was named Möngätü Qiyan (Möngätü means a person who has many birthmarks.)' (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 81). (Note of the editors.)

[18] Using a clan appellation in the names of the leaders was widespread enough practice among the Central Asian nomads. One example would be the names of princes who headed the armies of separate groups of Turks from the Ashina clan, discussed by Malyavkin (1989: 40).

[19] The name of his father was Čaraqa-Ebügen of Qongqotan (Rachewiltz 1972: 28). The epithet *'ebügen'* (old man) in the present context refers to seniority or to honourable status as forefather. The origin of Qongqotan emerged from Čauĵin Örtegei, the younger son of Qaidu. The Qongqotan applied for exclusive position in the ruling elite. Mönglik Ečige was the husband of Hö'elün-eke. Two sons of Mönglik Ečige or Father Mönglik were well known: Tolun Čerbi and Söyiketü. And 'Mönglik's most famous, or rather notorious, offspring was undoubtedly his fourth son Kököčü [...] Kököčü overreached himself and went as far as challenging Činggis' leadership, but failed and was destroyed' (Rachewiltz 2004: 869).

The analysis of the names of Chinggis Qan's forefathers, eponyms and ethnonyms, and their inclusion into the leaders' names during the building of the Mongol *ulus* ('polity'), demonstrate the duality of its ruling elite. It also clearly shows that it originated from a military union. This moves us to interpret this sentence in the *History of the Kitan State* (*Qidan guo shi*) in a sense other than direct: '[their emperors] got dogs in the lands of *menggutsi* tribe' (E Lung-li 1979: 224). This might, in fact, refer to hiring a military team; the commonality composed of 'bears (Mongols) and wolves/dogs (Tayiči'ut)' had been formed in a territory of the original Mongol settlement (the Amur basin), the priority being then for the Mongols to give their name to the territory. Military qualities were emphasized as the basic characteristics of the Mongols: '[Tatars] admire the Mongols as warlike people' (*Mengda beilu* 1975: 53). This is confirmed by the following comment from the same author:

> In northeast live *vatsetsi* [...] On the three sides around *vatsetsi* live *shibei* who are referred to as *shibei, khuantou shibei* and *show shibei*. There are lots of copper, iron, gold and silver in their lands [...] Further north is the estate/property/domain Gou-guo [the Dog estate. B. T.]. People there have a human being's trunk and a dog's head; they are covered with long wool, therefore they do not wear clothes. They fight predatory animals with bare hands. [Their] speech is similar to a dog growl. Their wives are as ordinary people, they are able to speak Chinese. New-born boys become dogs whereas girls become human beings. Having married, they live in holes, [husbands and sons] eat raw food, wives and daughters eat like usual people do (E Lung-li 1979: 328).

Now the territory located northeast from the Kitan was defined as the place where the Mongols initially lived; this is why they are mentioned under the name Mongol-Shiwei in Chinese chronicles.

On this basis, it would be fair to suppose that the terms 'Mongol and Tayiči'ut' or 'Kiyat and Borǰigin' acted as designations of military unions, whose soldiers were called 'bears and wolves.' The paired ethnonym Kiyat-Borǰigin applied to the communality to which Chinggis Qan belonged:

Although Genghis Khan and his forefathers and brothers were of the Qiyat tribe, the sons of Yesügäi Bahadur, Genghis Khan's father, were called Qiyat Borjiqin. They are both Qiyat and Borjiqin (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 81).

In *The Compendium of Chronicles*, the double identity of the ruling elite ('they are both Kiyat and Borjigin') is mentioned only twice in connection with Yisügei Ba'atur. Borjigin ethnic identity is attributed to nobody else; in other contexts it is simply not mentioned. In another place Rashīd al-Dīn writes:

The third son was Yesügäi Bahadur, the father of Genghis Khan. The Qiyat and Borjiqin Qiyat are descended from him. (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 133).

The paired ethnonym Kiyat-Borjigin, however, is not found at all in the *SHM*; it is the identification marker used by Rashīd al-Dīn who persistently asserted Mongols' priority in power.

How did the alliance of Mongols and Tayiči'ut take shape? The data produced above implicitly show that the contrasting pairs *Mongo–Tayiči'ut/Kiyat–Borjigin* emerged very early and that these pairs, designating the ruling groups in the Mongol Ulus, were synonymous. We can say that the genealogies produced in both *The Secret History of the Mongols* and *The Compendium of Chronicles* give information on two intermarrying groups that were expressed in different paired names. The terms show the dual structure of the dominating elite, organized in two exogamic lines, giving birth to two groups of affiliated clans or phratries. Moreover, affiliation of the descendants was defined on both the mother's and the father's sides: genealogy of first-borns was based on patrilineal principle, while the subsequent children belonged to the mother. The communality later called Mongols was divided into two groups (Borjigin – Činua – Nukuz – Tayiči'ut + Kiyat – Mongol). Our materials allow us to think that Börte Činua and Гооа Maral could reflect the division of the community expressed by another set of paired names. In this way the duality (Tayiči'ut – Mongol,

who later became known as Mongols) of the newcomers in the Three-rivers area (Onon – Kerülen – Tuul) was codified.

On the whole, the ethno-political self-consciousness of the Mongols was under constant pressure due to changing circumstances and revisions of borders between groups, and, therefore, between their members. During those periods of unstable public life that led toward the formation of hierarchies, ethnocentric ideas prevail. Everything is based on genealogy; if there is no such genealogy to rely on, one must be constructed. The names Börte Činua and Гooa-Maral could reflect the fact that, while taking shape, the Mongolian Ulus (then called by another name) was based on a dual structure: the Tayiči'ut and the Mongols, before the former's final 'mongolization.' The analysis is not only explicit but also implicit, since these basic ethnonyms were obviously designations of military alliances between 'bears' (Mongols) and 'wolves' (Tayiči'ut). Constant military clashes over control of territory and riches (livestock primarily) increased the role of military alliances in the nomads' lives. Constant reconstruction and subsequent changes in the groups' names resulted from short-term military alliances, which at times at least arose on a volunteer basis and not only through conquest of neighbors. This was a rather traditional method of polity formation, which came to be seen as 'imperial' when it was reproduced on a much larger scale. Frontiers (cultural, geographical, political) between groups were defined within the limits of traditional power and political culture; this specific political situation revitalized genealogies and made them into a real political force. Thanks to flexible and conditional external boundaries, a group could rapidly expand under favorable circumstances, at the expense of other groups incorporated into the initial community.

One of the main concerns in the formation of such a hierarchy of identities was to limit access to power. The rebuilding of ethnic configurations as a political practice in the Mongol Ulus allowed duality to be expressed through a plurality of names: Tayiči'ut – Nukuz – Činua – Borjigin – Börte Činua, and Mongol – Kiyat – Гooa-Maral. The foundation of the Mongolian Empire by Chinggis Qan and the way he designates and defines the ruling elite by the double ethnonym 'Kiyat-

Borǰigin' signified an important step in interrelationships within the region. In this regard, let us remind Temüǰin's enthronement, whose repetition becomes understandable, in the context of opposition between Mongols and Tayiči'ut.

The Secret History of the Mongols repeatedly stresses the equal participation of Mongols and Tayiči'ut in the building of Great Mongolia. Qabul Qan is the head of all Mongols (*qamuq mongqol [qamuɣ mongɣol]*), which makes clear the Mongol commonality. By contrast, Ambaqai, a Tayiči'ut of the same generation (Rachewiltz 2004: 9), becomes '*qa'an* of all and lord of people' (*SH* §53; Rachewiltz 2004: 11) (mong. *qamuq-un qahan ulus-un ejen*, Rachewiltz 1972: 22). The sources constantly give evidence of kinship relations between these leading groups, Mongol and Tayiči'ut:

> When Yesügäi Bahadur died as a young man, the Tayichi'ut tribes – who were collateral relatives of Genghis Khan's on his father's side, as was stated in the section of his ancestors [...]. (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 153).

As to Ambaqai Qan (Hambaqai Khan), he said: '[...] *the Mongol tribes, all of which are related to me* [...] (my italics – T. S.)' (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 45). From the time of Ambaqai Qan, who established Tayiči'ut leadership in the commonality, the coexistence of these two groups (or tribes, in the supra-ethnic political sense of this term) was emphasized. Prior to this, at the time of Qabul Qan's election, this commonality had been called 'all the Mongols.' The data implicit here allows us to reconstruct a later transfer of power to Tayiči'ut and the formation of the new boundaries of another, larger commonality of *all* (*qamuɣ*). The third ruler (Qutula) brought authority back to the *qamuq mongqol [qamuɣ mongɣol]*, to the Mongol community (§57). 'According to the message of Ambaqai Qa'an, who had nominated both Qada'an and Qutula, all the Mongols and Tayiči'ut gathered in the Qorqonaq Valley by the Onan and made Qutula *qa'an*. The Mongols rejoiced, and in their rejoicing they danced and feasted. After raising Qutula as *qan*, they danced around the Leafy Tree of Qorqonaq [...] When

Qutula became *qa'an, he* and Qada'an Taiši moved against the Tatar people' (§57-58; Rachewiltz 2004: 12-13).

The boundaries of the commonality of which a *qan* is the head are defined through his election. Qutula's enthronement confirmed the creation of a dual polity: power was returned to *qamuq mongqol [qamuy mongɣol]*, while the Tayiči'ut came to occupy a subordinated position, taking part in the enthronement ritual called 'happiness of Mongols,' *mongqol-un ǰirqalang*, testimony to the priority of Mongol identity. From then on, both identities would apply to the Tayiči'ut, the second one being expressed on occasions when *Tayiči'ut* and *Mongols* united to struggle against other groups (polities) for leadership in the region; then, the Tayiči'ut would accept the name *Mongol*.

This situation, where Mongols and Tayiči'ut were both united and opposed, makes clear the recurrence of Temüǰin's enthronement that took place at different times and different places as described in *The Secret History*. If several scholars have noted this recurrence, none has given a satisfactory explanation of it. For me, it can be explained by the peculiarities of the relations between the two above-mentioned ethnic groups, if we take into consideration the times when the enthronements took place.

The first enthronement took place soon after the victory won by the joint forces of Ong-qan, Temüǰin and J̌amuqa over the Merkit. It was necessary not only because of the conflict between Temüǰin and J̌amuqa, but also, more importantly, because of the aggravated rivalry between Mongols and Tayiči'ut, who joined with J̌amuqa, leading the Mongols to consolidate. They 'camped at Kökö Na'ur of Mount Qara J̌irügen by the Senggür Stream in the Gürelgü Mountains' (§123). 'Altan, Qučar and Sača Beki, all of them having agreed among themselves, said to Temüǰin, "We shall make you *qan* [...]" This way they swore the oath *of loyalty*, and made Temüǰin *qan*, naming him Činggis Qa'an' (§123; Rachewiltz 2004: 49-50). The Mongols' consolidation under Temüǰin's aegis was emphasized by To'oril Qan of the Kereyit in his message: 'To make my son Temüǰin *qan* is indeed right. How can the Mongols be without a *qan*?' (§126, Rachewiltz 2004: 52). On the one hand, this first election of Temüǰin as a military leader of the

Mongols in the struggle against the Tayiči'ut can be called enthronement, insofar as the gathered assembly gave him the title of Qan. But on the other hand, the event occurred 'near Kökö Na'ur, on the small river Sangur and Qara J̌ürken,' i.e. in a place that was not particularly 'sacred' for the whole Mongol commonality. In turn, as we know, J̌amuqa was elected as *gür-qan* in Ergüne [Ergene] Qun, a highly sacral place known as motherland of the Mongols.

It was the latter circumstances (the sacrality of the place of enthronement and the competition with the Tayiči'ut and J̌amuqa) that made it necessary to repeat the enthronement. The first one consisted in electing a Qan as leader in war; the second (1206) replied to the need to extend authority over a considerably broader community. It is remarkable, and important to underline, that the second one was tied not only to victory over the Naiman and the Merkit, but also to the defeat of the coalition ruled by the Tayiči'ut and led by J̌amuqa. 'When *Činggis Qa'an* annihilated the Naiman and the Merkit, J̌amuqa was with the Naiman and his people were taken from him on that occasion' (§200; Rachewiltz 2004: 128) (mong. *ulus-iyan abda'asu*) (Rachewiltz 1972: 111). The defeat of the Tayiči'ut meant that 'the people of the felt-walled tents' were totally subjugated (Rachewiltz 2004: 133). The Tayiči'ut represented an *irgen* community (synonymous to the above mentioned *ulus*), as shown by the following passage:

§148. When [...] Činggis Qa'an plundered the Tayiči'ut [*tayici'ut-i*], he wiped out the men of Tayiči'ut lineage [*Tayiči'utai yasutu gü'ün*], such as the Tayiči'ut A'uču Ba'atur, Qoton Örčeng and Qudu'udar – he blew them to *the winds* like *hearth-ashes*, even to the offspring of their offspring [*uruq-un uruq-a gürtele/kürtele/*]. Činggis Qa'an carried away the people of their tribe [*ulus irgen-i*] (Rachewiltz 2004: 70). (mong. *Cinggis qahan tende Tayiči'ut-i dawuliju Tayiči'utai yasutu gu'un-i a'ucu-ba'atur qoton-orceng qudu'udar-tan Tayiči'ut-i uruq-un uruq-a gürtele hunesu-'er keyisgen kiduba ulus irgen-i anu godolgeju irejü cinggis-qahan quba-qaya ubuljeba*) (Rachewiltz, 1972: 66-7).

Following their defeat, the ruling elite of the Tayiči'ut (*Tayiči'utai yasutu*, with their tribe, or *Tayiči'ut-i uruq-un uruq-a*, the offspring of their offspring) was completely destroyed. Since the terms *yasu*, 'bone,' and *uruq*, 'offspring,' designate the *gens* level (homogeneous), the contents of this paragraph allow us to suppose that the Tayiči'ut, as a tribe consisted of descent-based subgroups that were ethnically heterogeneous, that together constituted a super-ethnic commonality or polity (*ulus, irgen*). The ruling lineage was destroyed; the subject populations incorporated into Chinggis' emerging polity (for further discussion on the nature of the 'tribe,' see the Sneath article in this volume.) This passage just cited constitutes the final page in history of the independent existence of the Tayiči'ut and their struggle for power with the Mongols.

After the execution of Jamuqa in 1206, an assembly gathered on the upper Onon River and proclaimed Chinggis as *qan* to restructure the Mongol Ulus. All peoples assembled there under the aegis of Chinggis Qan, including newly conquered peoples who lived in yurts, are in the *Secret History of the Mongols* called Mongolian Ulus (Mongolǰin Ulus), rather than Mongol Ulus, which means that not only the Mongols but also the nomadic peoples who entered the Ulus were included in the process of mongolization. It appears that the need to repeat the act of enthronement was preconditioned by the need to legitimize authority through the appropriation (mongolization) of the sacral place in Onon where Qutulu was once elected Qan.

The opposition between Mongols and Tayiči'ut probably did play a major role in the genesis of the Great Mongol Ulus, since traces of these struggles were preserved down to the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the time when *The Compendium of Chronicles* was written. It was Chinggis Qan's merit to have finally taken power within the Yeke Mongol Ulus for the Mongols. After his victory, two other senses of the name 'Mongol' developed alongside with its *gens* sense: 'ethnic' and 'having *potestas*.'

However difficult it may be to draw an accurate historical picture, we can identify some tendencies of ethno- and political genesis among the early Mongols, since the same terms serve to designate a common *gens* (*uruq, oboq, yasun*), an ethnic

group (*oboq, irgen, ulus*), or a type of power and polity. While the former terms differ from each other in *degrees* of homogeneity, the latter are not only heterogeneous *per se,* but also used in similar contexts, which undoubtedly makes interpretation difficult. Thus, it is possible that, alongside the common meaning of the name Mongol (as well as Borǰigin), another meaning arose, to describe a fighting group under the leadership of a military leader (the first, possibly reconstructed, being Qabul Qan's following); this led to the broadening of the commonality's boundaries, and therefore, to a new use of the term. Mongol started to be used as a marker of *ethnic* identification that designated alliances between ethnic groups (inclusion of warriors/*nökör/bo'ol* in the commonality and reuse of the term *bo'ol*, from marking subordinate associates to marking a public social structure of interconnected groups).

As the alliance became more larger and more heterogeneous, a new ethnic consciousness formed as groups entering the alliance took its name and simultaneously preserved their own. Such an expansion and reinforcement entailed that the name 'Mongol' referred to a new level of power (*potestas*), and came to designate a polity, a confederation of groups of various levels (clans, tribes, alliances). The enlarged use of 'Mongol,' which began to transmit not only the meaning of 'ethnophore' ('ethnophania') but also to designate larger dynastic political units and territories, led to the use of distinct terms for the ruling elite, which had their own ethnic specificity. The elite thus came to be called Kiyat Borǰigin, so as to distinguish it from the groups that did not belong to the Golden dynasty (Altan uruq). The ethnic meaning of Kiyat (Mongol) and Borǰigin (Tayiči'ut) was combined with a social one, suggesting that they formed a stratum of military aristocracy that came to power in the framework of a military alliance. The fact that in these pairs the names Mongol and Kiyat are mentioned first points to the Mongols' domination. I think this can be considered not only as a particular case but also as an archetype, which characterized polities in traditional societies. In the Chinese chronicles, we meet the double ethnonym *mongol-shiwei.* In my opinion, Mongols represent not one of the *shiwei* groups, as is commonly accepted, but a complex polity composed of two major groups,

in which priority belonged to the Mongols. Such interpretation would make it possible to speak of an early emergence of the Mongols in their ancestral home in the area of the Amur river.

Over time, social and political structures would become increasingly complex: multi-ethnicity increased, assimilation processes strengthened, an imperial ideology and new values developed. Mythological constructs became phenomenological reality, which had an impact on the social, cultural and political processes of the Mongol Empire. The social structure determined the political organization insofar as it consisted of hierarchically differentiated roles for each social unit. The basic criteria of dynastic and political organization were kinship relations, both vertical and horizontal, which determined relations between different ethno-social unions at each level. Social stratification – based on uneven distribution of rights and privileges, power, prestige, influence, duties and property, and characterized by systematic interaction of various elements and levels – was another of the mechanisms through which the organization of society was structured.

Though we cannot presume that a medieval person fully realized such practices of identification, we should pay attention to the following passage from Rashīd al-Dīn:

> Because of the glory, might, and respect they commanded, other types of Turks, in all their variety and names, made themselves known by their name, and all were called Tatars, just at present, because of the great fortune of Genghis Khan and is *urugh*, because they are Mongols, other tribes of Turks like the Jalayir, Tatar, Oyirat, Öng'üt, Kerayit, Naiman, Tangqut, &c., each of which has its own special name and sobriquet, all are proud to call themselves Mongol. Whereas before they used to deride this name, now their sons imagine that they have been known as Mongols from long ago, although it is not so. In ancient times, the Mongols were but one of all the tribes of nomadic Turks, but divine favor shone upon them, meaning that Genghis Khan and his *urugh* were to be of the Mongol race and many branches of them would come into existence. Particularly from the time of Alan Qo'a on, which has been three hundred years more or less, many branches have appeared that are called the Niru'un clans, and they have acquired prominence and

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glory. They have all become known as the Mongol nation. At that time the other tribes were not called Mongols [...]. (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 44)

The historical construction of the two commonalities' limits could never be definitively completed. Because of constant change in both time and space, creation of identity is a permanent, endless process. The designations fixed by the sources represent, I believe, not just a list of social actors, but various paired names and levels of identification that should not be reduced to a unified, rigid list. On the one hand, ethnonyms separated one ethnic group from another. But on the other, they could also assist integration of a group into a different commonality, probably even into a polity. The analysis of ethnonyms and their interrelationships shows that both differentiation and integration of communities – whose boundaries coincided if not completely at least substantially – could be carried out simultaneously through on-going manipulation of various ethnonyms/politonyms.

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Chapter 5

To Impress The Seal:
A Technological Transfer

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The use of seals seems to have been a general phenomenon through millennia, and all over the Eurasian continent used first of all as a mean of identifying public and private documents, instead of a signature as we know it today (as a handwritten original and personalized subscription), and secondly as a mean to ensure the secrecy of the content of the message. But its function has been more varied and complex than appears at first sight. Was not Mohammed called 'the Seal (*khātam / khātim*) of the Prophets,' because that 'seal' ends the list of the Prophets and acknowledges it by his own existence? In France, the 'Garde des sceaux' (Guardian of the Seals) is the Minister of Justice. If we share a secret 'sous le sceau du secret' ('under the seal of secret'), this means that we do wish to keep it confidential as a sealed document. In the world influenced by China, the seal has played a surprisingly significant role in the assertion of state power. In this paper, however, we shall not touch its use for identifying pieces of art, a question which lies out of the register of governmental techniques.

According to dictionaries, the word 'seal' can refer either to an artefact made in a hard material; or, secondly, to the embossed or intaglio engraving or cast mirror inscription hollowed out under the base of this object; or thirdly, the print of such a matrix, that is the inscription itself. This imprint, transferred onto a soft material, delivers a message more or less directly understandable. Its reading and interpretation is the subject of the flourishing art of sigillography. We will examine these three points in the Chinese culture, and afterwards in the Mongolian culture, mainly focussing on their political and symbolic meanings.

The Official Seal in the Chinese World[1]

The first origin of seals in ancient China is traced by archaeologists back to designs on Neolithic pottery, then to further engraving of words on Shang oracle bones – thus to the very origin of the Chinese script –, and later to inscriptions on bronze ritual vessels. The earliest seals, then referred as *xi* 壐 / 鉨 (though *xi* would later indicate only the imperial seal), are said to have appeared in the Shang time: made of bronze, their prints on wax or dried clay were used for personal identification, or as amulets or for insuring privacy of a parcel.[2] Since that time, the history of seals in China, in connection with the invention of printing, has evolved as a kind of tree with several successive branches. Most of these we shall ignore here, in order to concentrate on our main topic, the official seal during the imperial age. But it is worthwhile briefly to note here that the use of a print on clay (*fengni* 封泥) to seal a parcel and give the address of the consignee lasted even after the invention of paper, though pertaining no more to the history of the seal in itself. In spite of the general use of a private seal instead of a personal signature till the modern era in the world moulded by Chinese influence (especially in Japan), signatures have sporadically existed: for example, a kind of signature of lower scribes during

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[1] While preparing this paper, colleagues and friends suggested numerous bibliographical references and interesting questions to broach, which I digested with pleasure: I thank all of them collectively. Finally I must express a boundless gratitude to Richard Schneider, who introduced me seriously to the subject. Without his generosity and without his science this paper would not have existed. I am grateful to Isabelle Charleux who, with her usual kindness and scholarship, saved me from many inaccuracies. And finally, the style of this paper would not have been as readable as it is without its polishing by Robert Ross and Scott Pearce. But I plead guilty for the possible mistakes or inaccuracies still remaining.

[2] The origin of the Chinese seals being beyond the scope of the present paper, we give here only very general – perhaps already outdated – references: Na 1970: 1-8 (and 8-9, specimens of the first imprints on clay); Lai 1976, Introduction by Chang: x; Tsien 1985: 136-9; and concerning the impression on pieces of clay as a sealing practice, Giele 2005: 354-61.

the first centuries of the empire (Giele 2005: 361-87); or the so-called 'finger-seals' (*huazhi* 畫指) on Tang documents discovered at Tunhuang and Turfan[3]; or the so-called 'flourish signature' or 'cipher' (*hua-ya* 畫押) since the Tang dynasty.[4] The seal may be used as a talisman[5] and as a therapeutic means too.[6] And, last, but not least, the sigillography applied to non-official seals for the legends and the pictorial value of their imprint has formed a huge scholarly field in itself, in China at least since the Ming time, in Japan[7] and in Western countries.[8]

The body of the artefact and its matrix
The name referring to it has changed through Chinese history, generally, as usual in China, linked to some structural changes.[9] The word *xi*, which was the generic term in pre-imperial time, turned into the specific meaning of 'imperial seals' after the foundation of a united empire by Qin Shihuang (in 221 BC) and his regulation of the seal use. But there were times when the word *xi* was found ominous, owing to its likeness, it was believed, with the sound *si* 死, 'death.' Under the empress Wu Zetian in 693, *xi* was replaced with the word *bao* 寶, 'treasure, precious.' Since the eighth century, both words alternated, and then, after the Song till the end of the empire, *bao* became the generic term for the seals of the Imperial house (Na 1970: 21). Now, the modern generic term is *yinzhang* 印章, both

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[3] The classical study is Niida Noboru 1939.
[4] See Van Gulik 1958: 426.
[5] Examples given by Van Gulik 1958: 423.
[6] I thank Vincent Goossaert for having drawn my attention to this point, and having quoted to me the basic articles on the subject: Strickmann 1993; Strickmann 1995: 147-53; Strickmann 2002, chap. 4, 'Ensigillation. A Buddho-Taoist Technique of Exorcism': 123-93.
[7] According to Van Gulik 1958: 442 *sq.*, Japanese adopted Tang 'official seal' in the beginning of the 8th century, as a symbol and instrument of government; but it was not until the 16th century, that the practice of the seal expanded outside official circles.
[8] Cf. Van Gulik 1958, chap. 2, 'The Connoisseurship of Seals': 417-42; 417-19: main works about the art of seals in the Western literature available in the fifties.
[9] On the Chinese taxonomy of official and private seals: Na 1970: 20-4.

components of which having by themselves the meaning of 'seal' too.[10]

What makes up the body of the seal as an object is in fact a handle designed to hold the matrix in one's hand. At the beginning of the institution of the seal, during the Warring States (453-222 BC) and under the Qin (221-207 BC) and both Han dynasties (206 BC-AD 220), according to the description given by a great connoisseur, R. H. Van Gulik (1958: 419), the seals have utilitarian purpose only and no artistic value. They were made of a plaque of bronze, generally square, carved in intaglio and provided with an ornamental knob (*niu* written 鈕) pierced with a hole. Through this hole, a silk band (*niu* written 紐) was passed which ensured a firm grip when the seal was impressed. It was also utilized for fastening the seal to one's girdle (*peiyin* 佩印). The seal was then considered as a ritual object, just as sacrificial vessels for example.[11]

Changes occurred, firstly, when instead of clay, the material for imprint became silk and, after the second century, paper, for which the matrix was cast (or carved) more frequently in relief than in intaglio. Secondly, the dimensions of the seal, no more hung at the belt, became bigger, and the handle also bigger. For official seals, the matrix which was from 2.5 to 3 cm on each side in ancient times, reached some 10 cm or more for top ranking servants by the end of the empire. The size and the weight of the seal, it should be noted, depended on the hierarchical rank of its beneficiary.

Along the Mediterranean basin, in medieval Europe as in Islamic countries, the seal was, as a rule, round or sometimes oval, held in a cylinder or a ring, and made of stone or metal.[12] As in many other material and scientific fields, however, China

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[10] The other specific names (see Na 1970: 22-4; Van Gulik 1958: 419) referring to some particular seals are less usual and do not matter to the present topic.

[11] I thank Richard Schneider for this remark.

[12] Allan 1978. Interestingly, *The King's Dictionary. The Rasūlid Hexaglot* (2000) translates the Arabic *al-khātam*, 'seal ring' (303, term N° 205-c-14) into Persian, Turkish and Mongolian as 'ring' and not as 'seal.'

maintained her own tradition, and a square shape is typical of the Chinese official seal. The matrix of most of these was regularly square (*fangyin* 方印) or almost square, though in some occurrences the official Chinese seal was made of twin squares making up a rectangle, *bantong* 半通, the length of which was twice its breadth.[13] The shape of the object as a whole could be, in its plainest form, simply a cube or a kind of squared beam, though in the last centuries of the empire, the handle became circular. And, ascending the official hierarchy, the seals of the highest administrative levels enjoyed more and more elaborated handles, carved to depict symbolic animals – mainly lions or tigers in different positions, dragons and tortoises.[14] These bore a ribbon, the color of which was also loaded with symbolism.

The materials for making seals (*yincai* 印材) could be extremely diversified (Na 1970: 133-41; Lai 1976, Intr. by Chang: xii-xiii). If not cast, they usually required a hard and resistant texture suitable for engraving. This was especially the case with various stones used from the fourteenth century.[15] Generally, however, the matrix of official seals were cast in bronze, or for nobility in a precious metal; for the lowest ranks of the administrative body, it was in stone, while the seals for the Emperor and his kin were in jade.[16] The seals were usually cut in relief (*yangwen* 陽文 or *zhuwen* 朱文, with the Chinese characters appearing in red ink) rather than intaglio (*yinwen* 陰文 or *baiwen* 白文, the imprint showing a red background on which characters appear in white).

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[13] Round or irregular and eccentric seals existed in the leisured world of literati; but they would have been quite unthinkable in the hyper-ordered administrative world.

[14] Richard Schneider has pointed out, in an unpublished manuscript, that a handle for a seal given to a foreign people, the so-called 'vassal people,' might in the ancient time show a camel.

[15] See for example Lai 1976, Intr. by Chang: xi-xiii.

[16] Although strict laws had, since the beginning of the empire, forbidden the use of jade for private seals, the ban was often not respected.

Fabrication of seals and their legal protection

Since the beginning of the empire, the external appearance and the use of seals were regulated with the wealth of details that Chinese ritualism is fond of, each category of users subject to specific rules. There were the series of imperial seals (*yufu yin* 御府印),[17] the set of administrative ones (*guanyin* 官印),[18] of which a part were civilian (*wen* 文) and another part military (*wu* 武), and finally private seals.

With such a background, it could be expected that the making of an imperial or an official seal would be surrounded with definite rites and restrictions. Nothing of the sort, however. In fact only the verification and distribution of these seals came under the Board of Rites (*libu* 禮部). Plain artisans made them, according to their speciality in the working of a specific material or a special technique. As Richard Schneider has kindly explained to me, to prepare a seal on stone or on jade, first a stone-cutter shaped the raw material and sculpted the handle; then, as was the case with the carving of a stele, a scholar drew on paper the model that would be stuck on the bottom of the future seal and engraved by the seal-engraver. It was typical that, in the description of imperial workshops of Tang time, there were special places for working jade, leather, arms, basketry, and so forth, but the specific preparation of seals was not mentioned.[19] A special Office for the Manufacturing of Seals (*zhuyin ju* 鑄印局) appears for the first time, near the Ministry of Rites, in 1268 under the Chinggisid Yuan dynasty (Farquhar 1990: 196, item 35.7), and this service lasted till the end of the empire.[20]

It was the custom that the seal become the centrepiece of an important ritual at the time of its handing over to its beneficiary. The account of reception of the seal (*jieyin* 接印) by a newly appointed official at the head of a *yamen* in the late nineteenth century is really impressive, with three successive

[17] On imperial seals: Na 1958: 42-57.

[18] On administrative seals: Na 1970: 57-67.

[19] See des Rotours 1947: 458 and *sq.*

[20] Hucker 1985: 184, n° 1453. On the technique for engraving the matrix: Van Gulik 1958: 429-31; Lai 1976, Intr. by Chang: xvi-xvii.

stages of the ritual and numerous changes of ceremonial dress.[21] Under the direction of a master of ceremonies, the new incumbent would first welcome the seal, kneeling in front of it outside his residence. He would then perform a complex sacrificial ceremony in honour of the God of the Door. And finally, indoors in the main hall of his *yamen*, the *datang* 大堂, after having performed the three kneelings and the nine prostrations to the Emperor, he would sit in the *nuange* 暖閣 (a great panelled dais, resembling a pavilion inside the *datang*) and solemnly take possession of his charge with the first use of the seal. Each of the four characters *gongzuo daji* 公座大吉, 'Great good fortune for the office,' would be stamped with the seal and the broad sheet of paper on which they had been written posted at the door of the *yamen*. By this, the mandarin made known that he had entered into possession of his seal and thus assumed office.[22] His seal was definitely the core of an official's power. At the same time, however, he could not use it alone as he needed an assistant to employ properly the piece.[23]

When a seal was lost or worn away, a new one was made bearing the mention *xinrong* 新融, 'newly cast.' And among the means designed for preventing its usurpation was the obligation for its beneficiary to trim the four rims of its matrix (Hoang 1902: 70). This act was equivalent to an acknowledgement of receipt. When the official left his function, he had to return his seal (which was then transmitted to his successor). It was also forbidden to bury an official seal with a deceased person.[24]

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[21] Detailed description by Hoang 1902: 72-7.

[22] About the same ritual is followed every year for the 'closing of the seal', *fengyin* 封印, during the New Year holidays, and its reopening, *kaiyin* 開印 (See Hoang 1902: 77-9; cf. Mostaert 1999 [1935]: 315).

[23] Jiang Yonglin 2005, *The Great Ming Code* of 1397, art. 76 and *sq*.: 66-67. Philastre 1967 [1909]: 352-3, art. 70 (repeating the provisions of the Qing code); both officials are responsible if the affixing of the seal has been omitted (*id.*: 353-6, art. 71).

[24] As official seals have often been found in excavated tombs, this means that either the prohibition was not always observed, or copies were made to be buried with the deceased. It should be pointed out that a lot of seals are found on the sites of great battles of the past (a remark of R. Schneider).

As can be expected, the seals were protected by strict penal laws. The Tang Code, the *Tanglü shuyi* 唐律疏議 – the model for legislation of all the later dynasties – imposed a death penalty for counterfeiting the Imperial Seals and exile or penal servitude for counterfeiting official seals.[25] Under the Ming, to discard or destroy imperial or administrative seals was punishable by decapitation.[26] The same sentence was imposed under the Qing for counterfeit (Jones 1994: art. 358, p. 342) or theft [27] of any kind of seal.

The seal's imprint and functions

Most commonly, the matrix of official seals was cast or carved in relief. If military seals were sometimes roughly engraved with the tip of a knife, that was a consequence of the urgency of the situation.[28] The imprint (*yin* 印) in red, placed at the end of the document on the white ground of a sheet of paper, came to be widespread from the first centuries of our era, and for the last millennium has been the dominant use, especially from the time when the vermilion seal pad was invented in the *xuanhe* period of the Song dynasty (1119-1125).[29] In addition to this, however, at least in the late imperial period two other colours were occasionally used: purple, *zise* 紫色, for some offices of the capital and for the provincial governors; and blue, *lanse* 藍色, which was to be used for all seals during a period of imperial mourning (27 days for the Emperor and the Empress Dowager, 13 days for the Empress).[30] But vermilion, *yinzhu* 銀硃, made of cinnabar (mercury sulfide, a substance important in ancient Chinese alchemy), was the colour employed by the Emperor for his edicts and diplomas and by the civilian and military officials,

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[25] Translation by Johnson 1997: 419-27, art. 362-366.

[26] Jiang Yonglin 2005, *The Great Ming Code* of 1397, art. 65: 60.

[27] Jones 1994: 241, art. 259; Hoang 1902: 81-3. According to the Annamese Code which copied the Qing Code: repression of the illicit use of a seal for giving military orders (Philastre 1967 [1909]: 356-7, art. 72); sanction against a disrespectful attitude toward an official seal (Philastre 1967 [1909]: 323-8, art. 6S1).

[28] A remark of R. Schneider.

[29] Cf. Van Gulik 1958: 420-1.

[30] According to Hoang 1902: 80-1.

so that the general image we may have of an official seal is a square print, on which the Chinese characters stand out in red.

But a casual reader cannot expect at first glance to read the inscription. The founding father of the seal system in Imperial China, the first Emperor Qin Shihuang, imposed a unified seal-script, called *zhuanshu* 篆書, elaborated by his minister Li Si 李斯; and it has been officially in use more or less in the same form till the present:[31] unquestionably, it requires special training to be deciphered. And, worse, from the Tang period, a new variation of the seal-script was devised, where the horizontal lines of the character were drawn twice or up to nine times, the *jiudie wen* 九疊文, 'characters with nine layers' or 'nine-fold script,' fashionable in the Song, Yuan and Ming times.[32] So difficult to decipher was such a script that the text was very often engraved in the plain script on the top or on the side of the matrix, possibly with such other useful indications as the name of the office delivering the seal, the date, and so forth.

While in Western Christendom and in Islamic countries, the impression provided an image symbolizing its possessor's position, a Chinese administrative seal wrote in full its beneficiary's title or the name of his office,[33] as the aim of the print was to identify a function or an office.

The official seals of the Emperor formed a special group, more abundant with the passing dynasties: seven at the beginning of the imperial times, eighteen at the end of the first millennium, twenty-five in late imperial times.[34] One of them has appeared again and again in history as a nearly mythical and magical object: the famous 'Seal which Transmits the Empire,'

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[31] Van Gulik 1958: 421; Lai 1976, Intr. Chang: xv-xvi. Cf. Vandier-Nicolas 1959.

[32] Daudin 1937: 67-9, which calls the *jiudie wen* 'des caractères denticulés à neuf traits.'

[33] Hoang 1902: 62-9, gives a useful list of the texts of prints and of the corresponding characteristics of the body of the seals in late imperial China.

[34] Hoang 1902: 57, 60-1, lists the 25 imperial seals with their distinctive characteristics.

the jade *chuanguo xi* 傳國璽 ,[35] a substantial object which could well have been 10 cm long on one side.[36] All the sources agree that this seal was engraved by a craftsman named Sun Shou 孫壽 on the orders of the first Emperor, Qin Shihuang, at an unknown date, [37] and that the minister Li Si himself, the creator of the seal-script, calligraphed its text. It is thought that this inscription consisted of eight characters, *shouming yu tian / ji shou yongchang* 受命於天 / 既壽永昌 which can be understood as 'Receiving the Mandate given by Heaven, complete longevity and eternal glory.' The creation of seals was a key element in the setting up of a unified, centralized and hierarchical bureaucracy by the founder of the Empire. And the goal of the Seal which Transmits the Empire was to assert that Qin Shihuang did receive the Heavenly Mandate and that he was the only one to have it.

Its history after the end of the first dynasty is worthy of a swashbuckling novel: the seal disappears, and then reappears in times of crisis, found in such unlikely places as wells or rivers, accompanied by successive murders and usurpations. When a dynasty was securely established, as was the Tang dynasty, no more was heard of it. But it always reappears when the would-be emperor is a usurper, or when two dynasties compete for power: the possession of the seal is supposed to prove its owner's heavenly enthronement and his uniqueness. It goes without saying that the original seal was rather soon destroyed or lost and that the subsequent seals were fakes (which is why the National Museum of Taipei has two samples of a Seal which Transmits the Empire). The belief in the Imperial Seal, then called the *chuanguo bao* 傳國寶, survived till the early twentieth century;

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[35] The history of the *chuanguo xi* is given in the sadly unpublished article by Schneider, 'Le sceau de transmission de l'empire'; a less trustworthy version is to be found in Daudin 1937: 129-57.

[36] According to R. Schneider (unpublished ms.), on the basis of historical evidence and of the size of the two fake Seals which Transmit the Empire kept in the National Museum of Taipei.

[37] Naming the artisan who engraved the Imperial Seal is here a quite unusual and exceptional feature, as seal makers almost always remained anonymous.

it is said that when the warlord Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882-1948) seized Peking in October 1924 and imprisoned President Cao Kun 曹錕 (1862-1938),[38] he required from the young deposed Emperor Puyi 溥儀 (1906-1967) the handing over of his 25 jade seals, including the biggest one, the seal testifying that he had received the Heavenly Mandate. And when Puyi was enthroned Emperor of Manchukuo in 1934, once more in possession of the seal of power, he held it up to the sky, as proof of his legitimacy.[39]

Now let us consider the functions of the whole array of imperial and administrative seals in use from the beginning till the end of the Chinese empire. Of course, as in Western Christendom and in Islamic countries, the imprint of a seal helped to authenticate a document, to make its terms legal and to endorse its enforcement. But this is only a small part of the story. Within the Chinese administrative culture, however, the main interest of a seal did not lie in its impression but in its physical existence: the possession of this object alone, endowed its holder – the responsible civil official of a region, *zhou* 州, for example, or of a district, *xian* 縣 – with the authority and the power to issue and to implement orders. And the official did not even need to make use of its imprint: his authority proceeded from the sight of the seal alone, which was generally exhibited near his seat when he was in action. Likewise, the Seal which Transmits the Empire was never actually used to make an impression: its powerful presence alone was enough to support the Emperor's right to sit on the throne. At each level of the hierarchical chain, the seals received their compelling power from the legitimating authority who conferred them, ultimately the Board of Rites, the representative of the Emperor, who was himself an incarnation of Heaven, *tian* 天.

Friedrich Bischoff (1966) has provided us with a shrewd and well-penned analysis of the structural and symbolic analysis of the eight Imperial Seals of the Tang dynasty, which

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[38] About this episode of warlords' struggles, see *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, 1983, chapter by James E. Sheridan: 314. About Cao Kun, see Boorman and Howard, 1970: 302-5.

[39] According to Daudin 1937: 176-7.

established a model for all the succeeding imperial dynasties. Two seals accredited the legitimacy both of the dynasty itself, which had received the Heavenly mandate, and its current representative, the reigning Emperor. Three seals, used for diplomatic relationships, designated the Emperor as the 'Son of Heaven' (*tianzi* 天子), making known that his authority covered the 'whole world under the sky' (*tianxia* 天下). And three, in use for home affairs, were dedicated to the August Emperor, *huangdi* 皇帝, governing an empire which in fact bore the name of the dynasty, Tang or Song for example (we must realize that the meaning of 'China' given to the generic name *zhongguo* 中國, literally 'the Middle Country / Countries' is a modern invention and that its use to refer to the past is an anachronism, as is the expression 'Chinese Empire').

So, the political and executive functions could not be exercised without seals, the prints of which specified their legal basis. How essential the system of seals was to governance is clearly demonstrated by anecdotes dating back to the time of the first waves of Mongol incursions into North-Eastern China from 1214 on, when Shandong was shaken by popular rebellions. The official surrender of a town, either to the regular government (then the Jin, or Jürchen, dynasty) or the rebels, was symbolised not so much by the opening of the city's gates, as by the handing over of the city's seals, together with its registers of census, that is the necessary tools for levying taxes – the registers listing the taxpayers and the seals validating taxation (Aubin 1987: 129-30; Aubin 2000: 56-7). Events of the fifteenth century confirm the significance of seals in governmental management. When in October 1420, the emperor Yongle decided to transfer his capital from Nanking to Peking, the central government needed reorganization. As Hok-lam Chan recounts it: 'First, the seals of government were recast. Prior to 1421, the seals of offices at Peking had borne the characters *hing-tsai* [*xingzai* 行在] or residence *pro tempore*; but when Peking was formally designated as the imperial capital, this prefix was dropped. All the offices and agencies in Nanking were given new seals inscribed with the prefix Nan-ching [Nanking or Nanjing 南京] or Southern Capital to indicate their now subordinate status.

These changes in terminology were intended to reflect political reality.'[40]

Another eloquent instance is that of the notorious Yunnan Muslim rebel Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 (1823-1872), who from October 1856 till his death in 1872 led an independent polyethnic kingdom, the Pingnan guo 平南國 with its capital at Dali. As a sovereign, of course, he owned an impressive square seal (in solid gold, weighing 2.4 kilos, with a handle figuring a lion holding a ruby in its mouth). Since he did not strive to be counted as a rival to the Qing emperor, but as an autonomous subordinate, the right side of the imprint of his seal bore in antique Chinese characters 'Generalissimo Du, commandant of the troops.'[41] At the same time, however, presenting himself as a Muslim sovereign, the left side of the imprint told in an elegant Arabic script that he was *qā'id jami' al-Muslimin*, 'Chief of all the Muslims.'[42] According to D. Atwill, who had the good luck to view the original seals, the seals of the various offices in the kingdom were in the same way divided in two halves, the right side giving the name of the office in Chinese and the left remembering Du Wenxiu's Arabic name, Suleiman, in a convoluted Arabic script (Atwill 2005: 142-3). We may say that Muslim or not, the use of Chinese on a seal by a political actor acknowledged his place in that realm of political discourse.

This continues to be the case today: the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China at Taiwan both

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[40] *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, 1988, contribution by Hok-lam Chan: 242. Claudine Salmon points out to me that no Song seal has ever been found in South-East Asia, though we know that a new seal was given to each tributary sovereign at his enthronement to enable him to send messages to the Chinese court. Probably the obligation to return the seal at the death or dismissal of its owner is responsible for this absence.

[41] Figure of Du Wenxiu's seal in Atwill 2005: 148. But the author missed the character 'Du' in his reading of the Chinese text, which in full is *zongtong bingma dayuanshuai Du* 總統兵馬大元帥杜 (Aubin 2000: 68).

[42] Aubin 2000: 68. On *qā'id*, a military chief, see E.I.², IV / 65-68 (1974): 476-7.

make use of square seals with imprint in red ink, in some form at least carrying on this ancient tradition.

The Official Seal in the Mongolian World

Into modern times, the seals of Mongol officials closely resemble Chinese ones: a square matrix giving a red imprint, surmounted by an elaborate handle that generally shows a powerful animal, such as a lion, a tiger or a dragon. How such a transfer of style and symbolism occurred is the first question that comes to mind. And secondly, how did it evolve in the course of Mongolian history?

The introduction of the Chinese seals to the Mongols of the thirteenth century

Chinese influence was apparent in the steppes long before the Chinggisid epoch, the seal being among the artefacts that attracted the nomad rulers. As I am not an archeologist, my knowledge of the matter is rather limited. Still, pieces of evidence about seals among the Xiongnu are instructive. D. Ölziidolgor, in his *Mongol ulsyn töriin tamga* (1999: 11), gives a picture of a Xiongnu golden seal dating back to the Chinese pre-imperial time: round and showing a human (or divine) face, it follows the Western Asian model. Later, with the Han having sent many seals to steppe lords, [43] seals Chinese in their appearance and in their inscription came to be found in Xiongnu tombs. Examples have been found in Ordos (Chūgoku Nai-Mōko 1983: 50, illustr. no. 48) and in Qinghai, dating from the end of the Eastern Han (AD 25-220).[44]

There is nothing specific on the subject in that great Mongolian source of the thirteenth century, the 'Secret History of the Mongols,' an epic chronicle [45] of the adventures of Chinggis Qan. But we can find a clue in the main official Chinese source, the 'Yuan History' (*Yuanshi*). As customary in China, this was composed by the next dynasty, after the fall of

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[43] Cf. Hulsewé 1979: 91, note 117 *et passim.*

[44] I am grateful to the archeologist Guilhem André for providing me with its picture and the related information.

[45] An expression coined, for example, by the translator and perfect expert of the text Igor de Rachewiltz (2004).

the Yuan in 1368, but this time at an unusual speed: it was completed as soon as 1370, so that we can be confident that the original documents found by the Ming compilers in the imperial Yuan archives have been preserved without important changes. Thus the 'Yuan History' (*YS* 124.6a-b) recounts how Temüjin, the future Chinggis Qan, was first in contact with an imperial seal in 1204. This date would make the encounter very early, two years before he proclaimed himself khan under the name of Chinggis Qan and several years before his first meeting with China. In 1204, the Uyghur Tatar Tunga[46] is captured by Mongolian soldiers after the defeat of his master, the Naiman sovereign Tayang Qan. The object he carefully hides in his bosom intrigues Temüjin: it is the silver seal of Tayang Qan, of which Tatar Tunga was the keeper. When, having inquired about the usefulness of this thing, Temüjin comes to understand that it was a guarantee of the movements in and out of money and grain derived from taxation, he decided to equip himself with such a seal, which he also entrusted to Tatar Tunga. A legend exists that this same Tatar Tunga introduced the Uyghur script to write down the Mongolian language.[47]

In later times, the system of seals became clearly widespread. Thus, when the grandson and third successor of Chinggis Qan, Möngke Qan, acceded to the throne in 1251, he rescinded all the existing seals to organize anew the distribution of power between princes and administrations (*YS* 3.3b). As far as I am aware, besides Uyghur counselors who promoted Chinese culture, the intermediaries who encouraged spread of the institution of administrative seals among the Mongols could very well be the so-called *shihou* 世侯, Chinese local power-holders of the 1210s and 1220s, who were rather analogous to *condottieri* or to some kind of warlords. Rallying to the Mongol

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[46] On Tatar Tunga [Chin. Tata Tong'a]: Atwood 2004: 530.

[47] On the creation of the Uyghur-Mongolian script (in written Mongolian: *Uyγurjin Mongγol üsüg*; in modern Mongolian: *Uigaržiin Mongol üseg*), see Kara 2005: 25-30. Šagdarsüren (2001: 22-3) echoes a nationalist theory which contests that the Mongols received their script from the Uyghurs in the first decades of the 13th century, and which advocates a direct borrowing from the Sogdian script, at the same time as the Uyghurs, as early as the 5th century.

conquerors, they brought with them the allegiance of whole regions of Northern China, while they taught the niceties of the Chinese administrative system to the very clever Muqali, the general then in charge of the conquest of China.[48] Muqali understood what they involved.

As for the Jade Seal which Transmits the Empire, the Northern dynasties which reigned on Northern China before the Chinggisid Yuan – the Liao (907/947-1125, Kitan, i.e. proto-Mongolian) and Jin (1115-1234, Jürchen, i.e. Tungus) dynasties – already had their own. When in 1123 soldiers of the new Jin dynasty seized the Southern Capital of the Liao, Yanjing, the future Peking, they took hold of the famous Seal with its eight characters of good omen.[49] And the seal dramatically reappears twice in Yuan history. The first such occurrence came during the final campaign against the Southern Song, when their capital, Hangzhou fell in 1276. A jade seal with the eight founding characters is said to have been discovered there (*YS* 9.2b, 122.12b); if it ever truly existed, however, it seems to have been lost shortly after.

But in 1294, three months after Qubilai's death, a strange story describes another episode of the reappearance of the alleged jade seal of Qin Shihuang.[50] This time, it was discovered among the belongings of one of general Muqali's descendants, who had recently died in poverty. It had supposedly been found in possession of the last Jin emperor, when the Mongols overturned him in 1234, and previously to have come from the Song Emperor Huizong, when the latter was captured in his capital of Kaifeng by the Jin in 1127. (It should be noted that this loss did not impede the Southern Song from later having their own seal, while the Jin are presumed to have held the

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[48] Aubin 1987 and 2000. On Muqali and his descendants, see Rachewiltz 1993: 3-12.

[49] *Jinshi* (Bonaben ed.) 2.21b; and description of this seal: *Jinshi* 31.12b.

[50] The story, told by a scholar and lover of antiques, Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (*ca.* 1320- *ca.* 1399), in a volume of anecdotes and personal opinions, the *Chuogenglu* 輟耕錄 (26/1a-7b), is confirmed by several mentions in the *YS* (18.1b, 116.2b, 164.14a); it has been finely expounded and commented by Herbert Franke 1994 [1978]: 42-5.

Imperial seal both of the Liao and that of the Northern Song, both of them being, of course, taken as the original one created for Qin Shihuang.) If in 1234 nobody in the Mongol camp seems to have paid attention to the imperial jade seal, such was not the case in 1294. Two Chinese scholars worked on deciphering the eight characters written in the difficult seal-script, and when they reached the conclusion that they had in their hands the genuine Qin Shihuang jade seal, they decided to present it to the Qonggirad princess Kökejin, the powerful mother of the emperor enthroned shortly after, Qubilai's grandson, Temür (Chengzong 成宗, 1265, r. 1294-1307). The promotion of Temür, strongly backed by his mother, rather than of his elder brother (born to another mother), gave rise to a succession crisis.[51] So, as the best specialist of the history of this time, Herbert Franke, has put it: 'It is clear that the discovery of an antique seal symbolizing the transmission of imperial power over the centuries was of great propagandist value, also with regard to the Chinese intellectuals in the capital. The move to present it to the mother of the heir-apparent was certainly designed to increase his legitimacy as successor of Qubilai. [...] But still greater was the impact on the Mongols' (Franke 1994 [1978]: 45). It is from that event that the imperial jade seal came to play a key part in the political culture of the Mongols, as we shall see.

The prints of the Mongol seals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

One of the most ancient Mongolian seals[52] is to be found at the end of the letter that Chinggis Qan's third successor, Güyüg Qan (b. 1206, r. 1246-1248), sent in 1246 to the pope Innocent IV (b. 1195, r. 1243-1254). The great scholar Paul Pelliot has given a landmark translation and analysis of the six Mongolian lines forming the print.[53] The content is characteristic of later seals of

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[51] On this crisis: *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, 1994, chapter by Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing: 492-6.

[52] Since the time of Pelliot, several old seals from the Chinggisid period have been discovered, especially in Inner Mongolia.

[53] Pelliot 1922-1923: 22-7, reproduction of the seal: 22; supplemented by the beautiful analysis of Mostaert and Cleaves 1952: 485-95, and by

the Mongolian rulers: *Möngke tngri-yin kücündür kücündür*, 'In the strength of Eternal Heaven,' and, in the Chinese way, a forbidding order, enjoining people to be afraid. But such a lengthy text written in Uyghur script is, in its physical form, not at all characteristic of the Mongolian making (or ordering) of seals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The typical imprint during that period, which would spread through the whole of Inner Asia in the fourteenth century, is composed of two to four lines of text – most usually three, as far as I am aware.

The most remarkable point is that the Chinese seal-script was in competition with the 'Phags-pa or 'Square script' (*dörbeljin üsüg*). Based on the Tibetan script, the 'Phags-pa appeared under the rule of Qubilai in the 1260s and was officially instituted in 1269, in order to give an alphabetical and phonetic script to the Mongol, the Chinese and all the languages in use in the universal empire and to supply a specific national script, as the Liao, the Jin and the Tangut Xia had done.[54] Now the new system of writing was then one year ahead of the proclamation of the Yuan dynasty by Qubilai. The adapter of this new alphabet, a Tibetan monk of the Sa-skya sect, 'Phags-pa (1235-1280), had been a protégé of Qubilai since 1253, when the latter was governor of Mongol China. The monk would later become nearly Qubilai's associate, as 'State preceptor.' [55] Qubilai, enthroned emperor in 1260, was very fond of the creation of his Tibetan friend and ordered to have it widely used in administrative and diplomatic documents and even in historical and other writings. The 'Phags-pa script spread very

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Rachewiltz (1983), which deals not only with the text of the seal, but also with the alternative use of both names, *qan* and *qa'an / qaghan*.

[54] Reproduction of a Jin administrative seal in Na 1970: 178-9, pl. 10; of a Liao one and of a Xia one, *id.*: 180-1, pl. 11.

[55] Biography of 'Phags-pa by Luciano Petech, *In the Service of the Khan* 1993: 645-54; Atwood 2004: 437-8. Among the extensive literature dealing with the 'Phags-pa script, we will recommend the basic handbook, by Poppe and Krueger 1957. For commentary: Clauson 1959. A summary of the question is in Atwood 2004: 519-20; or in Kara 2005: 51-62. And see deciphering of the letters of this script by Šagdarsüren 2001: 80-125.

slowly and after the fall of Yuan, could not supersede the Uyghur one owing mainly to its intrinsic difficulty and its inadequacy for rendering Chinese and Mongolian phonetics. [56]

But its success as a seal-script for writing Chinese in Inner Asia remained unabated during the next century, as can be observed from the numerous surviving traces of 'Phags-pa script used for phonetic transcription of a Chinese original.[57] Although its intended purpose was a philological one, in practice it appears as the Mongolian version of the most widely spread Chinese seal-script, the *jiudie wen*, the nine-fold script, looking as an imitation of it. Here are typical specimens:

(a)   (b)

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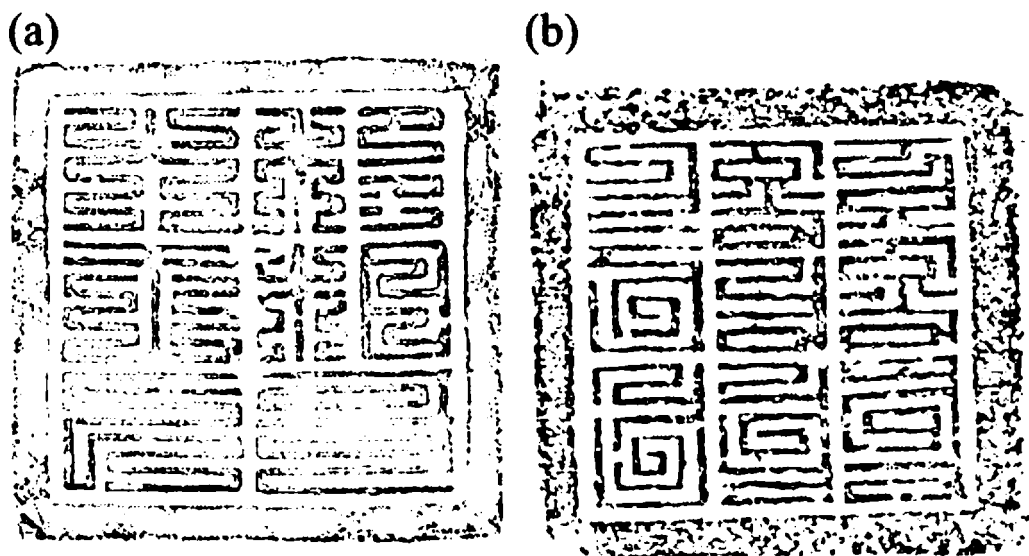
[56] The 'Phags-pa script could render sounds of the Chinese language but not its tones; and for the Mongolian, it was unable to distinguish certain different letters, such as γ/gh and g.

[57] The surviving 'Phags-pa seals have been extensively studied by specialists of the Chinese language during the Mongol domination, a fine example being Farquhar (1966), which gives official seals of 1274 (see above), 1278, 1280, 1295, 1299, 1330-1340, 1341-1350, 1345, 1358, and 1377 (i.e. after the fall of the Yuan dynasty), some undated pieces and private seals. It also gives (p. 388) a Turkic cipher seal which is the only known text in a Turkic language written with the 'Phags-pa script.
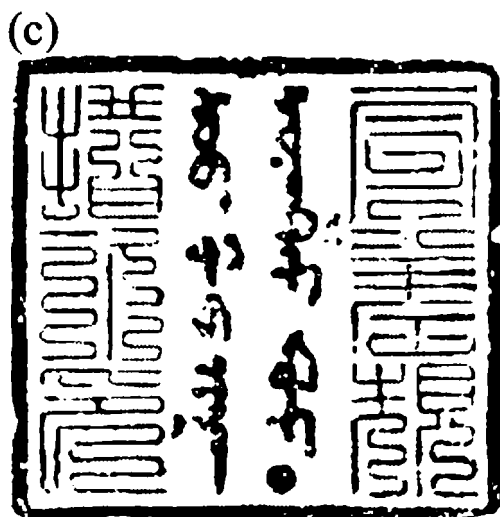
(a) The seal given to the Prince Yisüngge, nephew of Chinggis Qan, in 1262: in Chinese nine-fold script, bearing 'The seal of the great prince Yisüngge' (reproduced from Farquhar 1966: 364).

(b) An official seal of 1274, in Chinese written with 'Phags-pa, telling 'Seal of the official in charge of leather goods for Shangdu circuit' (the back of the matrix bears the date and the mention that the seal was manufactured by the Board of Rites) (from Farquhar 1966: 369).

(c) A multilingual seal in Chinese nine-fold script on the right, in Uyghur script in the middle and in Chinese in 'Phags-pa script on the left (no date given) (from Ölziidolgor 1999: 21).

For a non-specialist onlooker, the closeness of both scripts is certainly confusing. But, with the 'Phags-pa script, the Mongols of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, although involuntarily, acquired their own seal-script, as beautiful as the Chinese one.

The functions and evolution of official seals

In connection with functions and evolution of official seals under the Mongols, several points must be stressed. First, the official seals in the Chinese fashion were challenged by a Mongolian institution of the thirteenth century, the tablets [of authority], referred to with a Chinese word, *paizi* 牌子 . This word, traditional in China for designating the ancestors' tablets and now used to refer to a sign-board, is pronounced in Mongolian

paiza (*paiz* in modern speech).[58] Before the Mongols, the Tangut Xia had already used silver *paizi* for levying troops.[59] We know that the Jin used them as well, and have a direct testimony of a Liao *paizi*.[60] The Yuan tablets were oblong (occasionally round) plaques, made of bronze, silver or even gold. Some were decorated at the head (above the hole for hanging it) with a tiger or a bird (depending on the rank of its holder), which proclaimed the *paizi* as a warrant of the officer's having being sent as a government messenger.[61] Several *paizi* written in Uyghur or in 'Phags-pa script have been discovered all over the whole vast area covered by kingdoms inherited from the Mongol empire of Chinggis Qan and his immediate successors.[62] The text was most forbidding: 'By the strength of the eternal Heaven. Let the name of the emperor be sacred. He who has no respect shall be guilty and die' (Poppe and Krueger 1957: 58). Here the old function of

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[58] The genuine Mongolian word designating the tablet of authority, *gerege*, attested four times – thrice in chancery documents in Iran and once in a funerary inscription of 1335 in China (Cleaves 1953: 255-9) – had no posterity in Mongolian and has been till now superseded by the word *paiza / paiz.*

[59] *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, 1994, chapter by Ruth Dunnel: 183.

[60] See a Kitan *paizi* in *Wenwu*, 1974.10: 82-94 (I am grateful to Li Ping-tsung for having supplied me with this article).

[61] The badges in two parts, as the *fu* 符 of the Tang, described by Robert des Rotours 1952, or the *hefu* 合符 of the Qing, were used in the same circumstances as the *paizi*, but they proceeded from another technical point of view: a logic of control of its bearer's actions (on the *hefu* of the Qing, see the learned note of Ligeti (1958: 215, note 5).

[62] Dang Baohai 2001 and 2003 gives a detailed survey of eighteen existent *paizi* of the Mongol Empire, the first one having been discovered in Eastern Siberia in 1846, the last one having been purchased in Inner Mongolia in 2000, several issued by the Golden Horde. According to the author, their use comes under three categories: the postal service, the attribution of an official position, night travel and observance of the curfew. This article takes up all the *paizi* earlier published, for example in *Sokrovica Zolotoj Ordy* 2001: 29; Morgan 1987: 105; or by Poppe and Krueger 1957: pl. VII-VIII.

the seal as an object bearing witness of the holder's authority was assigned to the *paizi*.[63]

Secondly, another episode of the story of the seal during the Mongol domination is connected with its name. In Mongolian, "seal" was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the word *tamqa*, which became the modern *tamga*, and at the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of sixteenth century adopted the enlarged form *tamay-a* (which in the written language duplicated the consonant to take the form *tamγga*; we will use the form *tamga* below). This word comes obviously from the Turkic, certainly through its use by the old Uyghur chancery which formed the nucleus of the Chinggisid civil administration.[64] The institution and the word of *tamga* have a long history in the Eurasian steppes (Leiser 1998; Doerfer 1965, "Tamġā"). From a remote past it was a mark of ownership, generally collective (of the clan or of the family), which was put on valuables and represented by a very simple and stylized drawing. Among the Mongols, the *tamga*, besides its meaning of seal, was and still is the brand apposed to the thigh of a horse or a camel as a sign of property (in the Communist era, the owner of the *tamga* was the cooperative of rural production, the *negdel*). The inventory of various *tamga* in use among the Turco-Mongol peoples is an important part of the ethnographic field and an abundant bibliography is devoted to the subject in Western languages, and even more in native literature.[65]

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[63] The *paizi* have been in use till the early 20th century: Fr. A. Mostaert gives the text of the inscription of two of them still in service after the proclamation of the Chinese Republic, in Inner Mongolia, in the region of Ordos, inside the great bend of the Yellow River (Mostaert 1999 [1935]: 328, note 2).

[64] See Ligeti 1958: 223, note 21. The choice the Mongols have made of this word of *tamqa* / *tamga* is all the more remarkable since they have preferred to keep the Chinese word *bao*, pronounced in Mongolian *buu*, for meaning the imperial 'Seal which Transmits the Empire.'

[65] For example, by Mongol authors: Čoisamba 1974; Perlee 1976; Cayan 2004 [I am grateful to Isabelle Charleux for having given me this rich volume]; Rintchen 1954; Rinčen 1958, 'Tamgi i znaki sobstvennosti Mongolov'; and by foreign ethnographers: Humphrey 1974; Vajnberg and Novgorodova 1976. The drawing of a *tamga* as a mark of property can be found in the most remote places of the Inner

The fact that originally the *tamga* was not a mark of authenticity but of possession appears to confirm what is already well known: that for the Chinggisid family the empire was their private property. And if we remember that Chinggis Qan, and probably Muqali too, were attracted by the benefits of the use of seals in levying taxes, it is not surprising that, since the Mongolian domination of the thirteenth century, the *tamga* have also been the name of a tax on goods and services among several Inner Asia peoples and in Siberia under Russian rule.[66] Hence in Russian the word *tamožnja* which designates the Customs.[67]

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two other words have contended with the word *tamga* for covering the whole field of seals and marks of ownership. One is *temdeg,* 'a sign,' which plays on the phonetic parallelism between *tamga* and *temdeg*. But although given by some Mongolian dictionaries as equivalent to *tamga,* it occupies a lower rank, marking out private or less important seals (Rintchen 1953: 25). The other word is the Persian (transmitted through the Uyghur) *nishan*, which became widespread in the lands of the Golden Horde. Meaning a cipher (in Chinese *huaya* 花押) rather than an administrative seal, it disappeared among the main Mongolian stock. In the end, within the Turco-Mongolian domain the word *tamga* remained the only one for designating a square seal with Chinese characteristics.[68]

Thirdly, under the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the use of seals was very carefully regulated by law, imperial edicts and judicial cases. Legal intimidation may have been no harsher than under foregoing dynasties; perhaps it is just better documented.

Asian world: thus, in Bashkurdistān (Southern Ural), the Bashkir beekeeper marks with a *tamga* the tree which he has chosen for fixing a wild swarm (according to the Russian newspaper *Itogi,* quoted by *Courrier International*, n° 519, 12-18 oct. 2000: 54).

[66] Leiser 1998. This tax, levied upon urban populations, was introduced into the Near East during the reign of Hülegü (r. 1256-1265).

[67] Cf. Dal' 1955 [1882]: 389, s.v. *tamga.*

[68] For example, in the 14th century and afterwards, the Turkic expression *al tamga,* 'red *tamga*,' or, in Persian, *āl tamġā*, was a usual term in the language of the chancelleries, meaning the royal seal or the document marked by such a seal (Ligeti 1958: 214).

But numerous texts clearly reveal the results.[69] The general rule is that the forgery or theft of an imperial seal is counted as the sixth odious crime liable to a death penalty and that the craftsmen engaged for doing the work must receive 107 strokes with a heavy stick.[70] It may not be by chance either that, as we have seen, in 1268 a special 'Office for the manufacturing of seals' (*zhuyin ju* 鑄印局) was established for the first time in the Chinese history, near the Ministry of Rites, one year before the general adoption of the 'Phags-pa script.[71] The Mongols had obviously well understood what a Chinese seal was made for and they widely used it. We ought to ask if this perceptiveness is not linked to the surprising legal acumen that I have elsewhere detected throughout Mongolian history (Aubin 2004)?

Fourthly, the model of the Chinese square seal was disseminated through the whole of Inner Asia thanks to the Mongol conquerors. At the time of its broadest extension, in the first half of the fourteenth century, two or three languages (Chinese, Mongolian, and possibly Persian) and three or four scripts (Chinese nine-fold seal-script, 'Phags-pa, Uyghur, and possibly Arabic script) were used in various combinations. The basic pattern was one language-one script. The most common occurrence was use of the 'Phags-pa script for a text in Chinese,

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[69] Translation of texts from the 'Yuan History' (*YS* 102, Penal Monograph, art. 13) and the *Yuandianzhang* 元典章 ('Statutes and Precedents of the Yuan,' a compendium of legal or administrative texts and judicial cases), and reference to the important description given in the *Chuogenglu* 30.1a-4b, by Ratchnevsky 1937, vol. 1: 31-5; repression of the falsification of seals in the 'Yuan History': Ratchnevsky 1985, vol. 4, art. 705-715: 189-98. (The troublesome question of the real content of codes and penal laws in use during the Yuan dynasty is not relevant here: suffice it to say that the prescriptions of the Penal Monograph of the *YS* reflects the reality at least at the end of the dynasty, and possibly through the entire dynasty, especially in such a sensitive field.)

[70] *YS* 102.4b (Ratchnevsky 1937, vol. 1: 14), and 105.1a *et sq.*, art. 705-715 (Ratchnevsky 1985, vol. 4: 189-98).

[71] From 1273 till 1276, the Imperial Library Directorate, *mishujian* 秘書監, had a subordinate office in charge of the carving of official seals (Farquhar 1990: 137).

the Chinese being as a rule on the right of the print. David M. Farquhar (1966), for instance, reproduces sixteen seals with Chinese written in 'Phags-pa. A seal of 1348 or 1360 bears a Turkic inscription in 'Phags-pa (Franke 1994 [1978]: 19). Until the twentieth century, Tibet maintained the use of Chinese-like seals, written in a script closely resembling 'Phags-pa, called in Tibetan the *Hor yig*, 'Mongolian script.'[72] And we see in 1691 the king of the Western Mongolian Jungars (a branch of the Oirad), Galdan (*al.* Bošoγtu Qan, r. 1671-1696), affixing on a letter written in Oirad to the Tsar ('the Great White Khan') his personal royal seal put in *Hor yig,* a habit which appears then to have been fashionable.[73] Even later, in 1903, the prince (*wang* 王) of Alashan (in Western Inner Mongolia) used a seal cut in 'Phags-pa letters.[74]

Interestingly, the seals of the Ilkhans' letters, sent by the Mongol sovereigns of Persia to Western powers, were in the Chinese seal-script.[75] The custom of a square seal containing the name of the ruler and a maxim appended to a *farmān* (a royal or administrative decree in the Persophone chanceries of Islamic times and in many Turcophone ones too) and used as a means of authentication was a Chinese custom introduced into western Inner Asia by the Mongols. It was put in the Chinese seal-script at least till the break between the Yuan and the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316-1335); afterwards it was in Persian written with the Arabic script (Fragner 1999: 284-5, 287). The Jalāyirids (1340-1432), one of the successor-states to the Ilkhanids, still used square seals. (I don't know in which language nor which script.) Tīmūr (our Tamerlane, 1370-1405) brought the round seal back into fashion in Transoxiana and Persia; and at the end of their rule, the Jalāyirids had done the same (Fragner 1999: 285, 287).

It is well known that the Chinese seals of the Ilkhans were manufactured at Khanbaliq (or Dadu in Chinese, 'the Great Town'; later Peking), at the court and on the order of the Yuan

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[72] Schuh 1981; see also Clauson 1959: 304-5.

[73] Krueger 1969: 294-5. Printed seal of Galdan in Ölziidolgor 1999: 59.

[74] According to information supplied by Ts. Žamtsarano to N. Poppe: Poppe and Krueger 1957: 15.

[75] Mostaert and Cleaves 1952: 482-5 (the size of the seals is about 14.5 cm for the first, 9.5 for the second, 15 for the third); Mostaert 1962: 85.

emperor, who was at the same time the great khan of the Mongol empire; and that the seals were then brought to Tabrīz and ceremoniously delivered to the Ilkhan (Fragner 1999: 284). That was the proceeding followed for the seal of the seventh Ilkhan, Ghāzān (r. 1295-1304), which was in 1302 affixed to a letter to the pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294-1303) bearing a caption which can be understood as: 'The Seal [*bao, i.e.* an imperial seal] of the Royal (*wang*) Court to keep the country pacified and to govern the people reasonably' (*wangfu dingguo / limin zhibao* 王府定國 / 理民之寶).[76] With the word *wang*, 'king,' Ghāzān implicitly recognized the great khan's suzerainty. But the letter sent in 1305 by Ghāzān's brother, Öljeitü (r. 1304-1316), to the French king Philip the Beautiful (Philippe IV le Bel, r. 1285-1314) states 'Seal of the Truly Mandated August Emperor for whom Heaven indulges the ten thousand things' (*zhenming/huangdi/tianshun/ wanshi/zhibao* 真命 / 皇帝 / 天順 / 萬事 / 之寶).[77] As A. Mostaert and F. W. Cleaves noticed, it is utterly impossible that the Yuan emperor – then Temür (Chengzong, r. 1294-1307) – sent to a vassal a seal proclaiming him to be a Truly Mandated August Emperor, a title which was suitable for the Yuan emperor alone. This means that this seal used in 1305 had been made in Persia, though it was still written in Chinese (Mostaert and Cleaves 1952: 485).

As Christopher Atwood (2006) has cleverly demonstrated, the Chinese custom of having use of the seal controlled by an assistant was also transmitted to the Ilkhanids and through them to the successor khanates, of Crimea and others. Four *kesig* elders or imperial guards (called *qaraču beg* in the Crimean khanate) actually had the responsibility to control the khan's red seal, and ratified documents by affixing their own black small seal alongside the imprint of the khan's (Atwood 2006; Atwood 2004: 297-8).

In Ming times, we see Mongol princes eager to receive beautiful Chinese seals from the Chinese emperor as a mark of

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[76] Mostaert and Cleaves (1952: 483) offer William Hung's translation: 'The seal [to attest the authority] of the Headquarters of His Royal Highness to establish a country and to govern [its] people.'
[77] Translation of W. Hung, cited by Mostaert and Cleaves 1952: 484.

their recognition and a way to enhance their own internal position. In a story found in the 1607 hagiographic biography of the famous Tümed prince Altan Qan (1507/8-1581) – known for having strongly asserted his power upon Mongolian peoples and lands along the Chinese border and for re-introducing Buddhism into the steppes in 1578 – we are told that after a peace concluded with the Ming in 1571, Altan Qan received from the 'Great Ming Emperor' a golden seal, *altan tamay-a*. The translator of the biography, J. Elverskog, observes that this assertion is incorrect. At the ceremony of 1571, Altan Qan did not get a Chinese seal and it may be assumed that he still used his own Mongolian seal until he was finally granted a gilt silver seal in 1572. This was to be used in official correspondence with the Ming throne and for trade transactions with China. But such a gift aroused protest from the official Great Qan, the Čaqar qan, who in theory, if not in practice, was Altan Qan's superior. Later, in 1577, Altan Qan made efforts to obtain from Ming the genuine golden seal which his biography boasts about. These efforts were, however, apparently in vain.[78] Altan Qan himself gave to the newly recognized Dalai Lama in 1578 a golden seal with a handle consisting of a five-clawed dragon and his Tibetan name inscribed in 'Phags-pa script (Elverskog 2003: 161, note 297). In his turn the new Dalai Lama gave to the king a silver seal (*mönggün tamay-a, loc. cit.*). So the success story of the Chinese model seal continued its progress in Inner Asia well after the Chinggisid epoch.

When the Manchu overran Mongolia and China in the course of the seventeenth century, a new language was added to the seals (called *doron* in Manchu): the Manchu one, and shortly after, the script for transliterating it, which was based on the Uyghur-Mongolian script. Nevertheless, Mongolian remained one of the languages of the imperial chancery,[79] as shown by an administrative seal of the Western wing of the Urianghai (in Northern Qalq-a lands), in Chinese seal-script and plain Mongolian, displayed at a recent exhibition held in Germany.[80]

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[78] According to Elverskog 2003: 125 and note 193.

[79] See Ligeti 1958: 202-3.

[80] *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005: pl. 230: a reproduction of the matrix, giving the text with the mirror effect; printed text in Ölziidolgor

Thus, from the 1630s there could appear on official seals or tablets three languages and three scripts.[81] A fourth possibility was later opened with the creation of a Manchu seal-script, allegedly 'an antique script,' which viewed from a distance looks very much akin to the 'Phags-pa script or to the Chinese sigillar script. The alphabet of this seal-script published by G. Stary shows how each indentation of the letter written in the classical Manchu script is stylised into a geometrical form.[82]

Under Qing rule, the bestowal of seals by the court of Peking was for Mongol princes more than ever an event heavily loaded with religious and political meanings. As Fr. A. Mostaert, a prodigious expert of Ordos Mongols' customs, describes the reverence paid to the great (or main) seal of a banner (division of Mongolian people under the Manchu rule):

> The Mongols consider [the great seal] a sacred object. It is always in the immediate vicinity of the prince and a lamp burns night and day in front of the chest holding it. When the *jasay* [the prince head of the banner] undertakes a trip to the interior of his banner, he will take the seal with him, and it is then transported on [its own] horse, which a cavalier leads by the hand. When the prince spends a night on the road, the seal rests in a little tent that is guarded by a functionary. The great seal is only used for important documents and the important official correspondence. On documents and letters

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1999: 56 (in this same book, pp. 70-1, are prints of seals given by the Qing in Tibetan and Mongolian to monasteries of Outer Mongolia).
[81] An early trilingual round tablet of 1632, with Manchu on the right of the imprint, Chinese in a clear script in the middle, and Mongolian in modified Uyghur script on the left: Ligeti 1958: 239, plate).
[82] Stary (2006): Manchu 'antique' seal script alphabet from a 1875 publication: 171-83; reproduction of seals bearing inscription inscriptions in this Manchu so-called 'antique script': 128-34. Explanation of this script as used by Mongols: Šagdarsüren 2001: 210-17. Several bilingual imperial seals, with Chinese on the right as usual, and Manchu on the left, both languages noted in convoluted seal-scripts, are published in *Ming-Qing dihou baoxi* (1966), for example, plates 73, 91, 92, 316, and so on; pl. 75, only in Manchu seal-script; pl. 76, only in Chinese seal-script. See also Walravens 1992.

of lesser importance one applies the little seal of the jamu [Ch. *yamen*, the seat of banner administration].[83]

According to the convincing analysis drawn by J. Elverskog (2006: 83-5), not only the seal remained a sacred object (let us add, as it was in China), 'but, more important, its [annual] bestowal was also a vehicle whereby local rituals of authority were transformed. [...] Previously, a Mongolian ruler received the right to rule "from in front of the Lord [= Cinggis Qan]", [...] the transmission of power emanates now from the Heavenly-blessed Buddhist Manchu emperor.' Thus, the cult of Cinggis Qan was downgraded from worship of an overall possessor and distributor of political power, to a seasonal rite to a local god.

The Imperial Seal among the Mongols
This list, given at random, of some surviving official seals of Inner Asia does not intend to be exhaustive, nor is the sampling of languages and scripts appearing on them. Actually, I wanted to insist, first on the ethno-geographical spread of the Chinese model, thanks to Mongolian intermediaries; second, on the variety of responses in terms of languages and scripts given by the peoples concerned in their adaptation of the Chinese prototype; and third, on the importance non-Chinese rulers ascribed to the royal seals in the Chinese style and even in the Chinese language.

It can be noticed that all the instances of administrative seals of the fourteenth century quoted above, besides those issued within China proper, emanated directly from a ruler (of course, this selection of Inner Asian seals may come from the hazards of the keeping of archives). In China, a significant number of the surviving official seals were intended for a specific office or a local post and were issued, more or less anonymously, by the Board of Rites.[84]

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[83] Quotation from Mostaert 1956: 253, translated into English by Elverskog 2006: 83.

[84] All the seals studied by Farquhar (1966) come from China and concern military or civil officials.

Another point must also be addressed: it appears that the acting ruler could use his father's seal. In the Persian kingdom of the Ilkhans, for instance, Aryun (r. 1284-1291) affixed on two documents dated 1289 and 1290 the seal made for his father Abaya (r. 1265-1282), a grandson of Chinggis Qan; likewise, Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316-1335) confirmed a document dated 1320 with a seal that had belonged to his father Öljeitü (r. 1304-1316), a son of Aryun (Mostaert and Cleaves 1952: 431, 483-4). Similarly, at the beginning of Manchu rule, Hong Taiji (r. 1627-1635) – the so-called Taizong of the Qing dynasty to come – made use in 1631 of the seal of his father, Nurhaci (r.1616-1626) (Ligeti 1958: 205).

This remark leads us back to the Chinese tradition of the jade 'Seal which Transmits the Empire.' The facts prove that the Mongols – not only the rulers but the common people too – understood its meaning and usefulness astonishingly well. The mythology of the *chuanguo bao*, 'the Seal which Transmits the Empire,' also called *yubaoyin* 玉寶印, 'the Jade Seal,' actually was given a new life in the steppe under the Mongolian name of *qaš buu* (a mixed term, *qaš* being the Mongolian word for 'jade,' and *buu* being the Mongolian pronunciation of the Chinese *bao*) or *qaš buu tamay-a* (later only *tamay-a*), in a sequence of legends worthy of the Chinese tradition. This question has, however, already been treated in great detail by leading scholars – Pennti Aalto (1961 and 1963), Herbert Franke (1994 [1978]), Friedrich Bischoff and Klaus Sagaster (1989), Alice Sárközi (1993), and so despite the importance of the topic, we will skim over it.

We have seen how Qin Shihuang's seal is supposed to have been discovered among the belongings of a descendant of the general Muqali, the first conqueror of northern China during Chinggis Qan's rule. As H. Franke put it, the *qaš buu* 'came to be regarded as a symbol of Mongol and not only of Chinese imperial power.'[85] Therefore, 'when the last Mongol emperor fled back into Mongolia in 1368, he took the seal (whether this particular seal or not is irrelevant) with him' (Franke 1994 [1978]: 45). The native historical tradition later embellished the

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[85] Franke 1994 [1978]: 45. On the transition from the *chuanguo bao* to the *qaš buu*: Aalto 1961; *idem* 1963.

legend. According to one of the great Mongolian chronicles of the seventeenth century, the *Erdeni-yin tobci* by Saγang Secen (1662), 'it appeared miraculously before Činggis Qan's enthronement in a split rock, and was therefore an omen that he will become the legitimate ruler' (Franke 1994 [1978]: 45). Other chronicles turn the anecdote validating the ascendancy to supreme power into a tale of a divine grant by the Dragon king, at the time of the birth of the future great khan.[86] An even more extensive development of legends is clearly at work, going 'parallel to the sacralisation of Činggis Qan in Buddhist terms,' as explains H. Franke.[87] Alice Sárközi (1993) includes this miraculous bestowal in a set of auspicious signs and prophecies employed to justify the right of Chinggis Qan to govern the world and therefore legitimating his lineage at a time when it was contested.

Another chapter of this tale was added with the rise of Manchu power. The story has been related and analyzed by Okada Hidehiro (1992 and 1995) and Michael Weiers (1994 and 2000). In brief it is the following: in 1634 the last great Mongol khan, a descendant of Chinggis Qan, Ligdan Qan, having launched a campaign of reconquest and reunification of Mongolian lands, died of smallpox on his way to crush Tibet. The Manchu generals who, behind Ligdan Qan, were subjugating the territory of the future Inner Mongolia, presented to their sovereign Hong Taiji the jade seal left by Ligdan Qan. This seal, said to have been discovered by chance some time before, was claimed to be the miraculous seal of Chinggis Qan. M. Weiers (2000) has demonstrated that this story was invented by Hong Taiji himself to validate and strengthen his political position; he too understood the power of the seal to legitimate sovereignty.

The last episode in the long story of the seal of legitimization was played on a different stage. The founder of the Mongolian holy lineage of reincarnations of Jñānavajra (or

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[86] Essentially, Lubsan Danzan's *Altan tobči* of 1655, another version of this work known as the *Altan tobči nova*, Lomi's *Mongγol Borjigid oboγ-un teüke / Menggu shixipu* of 1732.

[87] Op.cit., p. 46. For a detailed analysis of the various legends in Mongolian sources: Bischoff and Sagaster 1989.

Zanabazar in modern Mongolian), the first Jebcündamba (in Tibetan rJe-btsun dam-pa) Qutuγtu, or Öndür Gegen (b. 1635, r. 1639-1723), was a prodigious religious sculptor and political figure of the seventeenth century. According to the tradition, he invented a new Mongolian script, the *soyombo*, in 1686. This new alphabet was intended to record mainly Mongolian, and secondarily Tibetan and Sanskrit, the sacred languages of Buddhism, but in the end it was more for ornamental design than any practical use. Each letter is actually very decorative, as it presents a triangular 'head' and on the right side an upright 'beam.'[88] The first letter and only the first letter of this writing system has the triangular decoration at its bottom and is steeped in Buddhist symbolism, especially as it is surmounted with the crescent moon, sun disk and flame.

This explains why it was rediscovered by the Eighth Jebcündamba Qutuγtu or Boγda Gegen (b. 1870, r. 1874-1924) when Outer Mongolia freed itself from the Sino-Manchu domination as the Qing dynasty was being overturned in China. Becoming the ruler of the new Autonomous Mongolia in Urga, the Boγda Gegen now took the first letter of his predecessor's writing system, then named 'the *Soyombo*,' as a symbol of Mongolian freedom that decorated the national flag[89] and was at the core of the official seal. Placed on a lotus flower at the centre of the seal imprint, it was surrounded on right and left by the name of the concerned office in Mongolian Uyghur script; this script being read from left to right, the name of the office began on the left side. D. Ölziidolgor (1999) reproduces imprints of fifty examples of such ministerial and official seals, which follow the Chinese model of a seal print divided into three lines.

When the Mongolian People's Republic succeeded the theocrat upon his death in 1924, a similar seal was cast with the *Soyombo* sign surrounded by the caption *Mongγol arud-un nam-*

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[88] Kara 2005: 165-7; to be complemented with Šagdarsüren 2001: 129-51, with a description of each letter. See also Atwood: 518-19: as the Tibetan and the 'Phags-pa script, the *soyombo* script is of the Indic type and syllabic; it is named after the famous Svayambhu [lit. 'self-existent'] stupa outside Katmandu city in Nepal.

[89] See Atwood 2004: 179, on Flags of the Autonomous Mongolia and of the Mongolian People's Republic.

un tamay-a, 'Seal of the People's Party of Mongolia.'[90] It was also retained on the national flag, topped by a red star. From that time on, this first letter of the *soyombo* alphabet was a powerful symbol of national pride at the time of an ongoing Soviet presence. But although its lotus base had been removed, its Buddhist meaning remained too visible for the Marxist ideology of the regime. As told by C. Atwood (2004: 490), 'in late 1939 the Mongolian leader Marshal Choibalsang presented to Joseph Stalin a proposed new "seal" [or more precisely a coat of arms or State emblem] for Mongolia in a typical Soviet style: sheaves of wheat forming a circle around a sun burst with a red star on the top and the name of the country on a ribbon at the bottom. Stalin, interested in Mongolia as a source of animal products, insisted the seal [or coat of arms] have a herder on a horse encircled surrounded by busts of animals. The seal, approved in the 1940 Constitution,[91] followed his recommendation and replaced the wheat sheaves with a geometric scroll and pasture grass.'

With a view to rescuing the *Soyombo* from its Buddhist background, the hyper-nationalist scholar B. Rinchen imagined in 1945 a splendid non-Buddhist gloss of its implied significance. Here is the translation of a version published later in Russian:

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[90] Imprint of the first seal of the Mongolian Peoples' Party is given by Kara 2005: 228, on the right.

[91] I thank Christopher Atwood for giving me the following precise information (on April 28, 2008): '1// In *Bügd Nairamdakh Nairamdah Mongol Ard Ulsyn ündsen khuuli huuli tüünd kholbogdokh holbogdoh zarim aktym emkhtgel, emhtgel,* vol. I (*1921-1940,* Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1972), p. 374, the text of article 11 of the 1940 constitution reads: Section 92: describes the seal with the four livestock heads, no soyombo, etc. Section 93: The flag of the Mongolian People's Republic shall have dimensions of 1:2 and shall be red in color. On the center of this flag shall be the state seal and on both sides of it shall be the letters 'Mongolian People's Republic.' 2// In the same book, vol. 2 (*1940-1970,* UB/ State publishing House, 1974), p. 56, is the law approved on July 10, 1945 'On Confirming the Shape of the State Flag,' which describes the flag we now know (1:2 dimensions, red and blue stripes, the gold star and *soyombo,* specifically stated to be 'without the lotus flower'). So conversely we may infer that the 1940 seal was maintained till 1960.

Above, this beautiful and original emblem is crown with the symbolic sign of fire. It is known that in the Mongolian symbolism fire means blooming, regeneration, expansion. It also means perpetuation of the race, blooming of the family, of the clan, of the people. The three little tongues of the flames respectively mean prosperity of the people in the past, the present and the future times. Under the sign of the fire, we see, on the emblem, the sun and the moon, the old totem of the Mongolian people, a national sign sung by old legends which say: Who is the father of the Mongolian people? The young moon. Who is his mother? A golden sun. The sign of fire over the sign of sun and moon means: long and prosperous life to the Mongolian people! [...] In the sign of *Soyombo*, two triangles, one at the top, the other at the bottom, mean in the whole of the elements of the emblem: Death for the enemies of the people. In the popular language the rectangle means uprightness, fairness, observance of principles [...]. So the two rectangles at the top and at the bottom of the emblem mean: All of you, at the top and at the base, be honest and sincere in the service of the people. In the Mongolian folklore, the fish is a being who don't close his eyes and thus symbolizes vigilance, and two fishes designate the men and women, reason and wisdom. [In fact here is represented the Chinese symbol of the *yin* and *yang* in the form of two fishes coiled in a circle] [...] The two vertical lines on both sides of the emblem mean a fortress, the walls of a fortress, and they are the graphic expression of an old Mongolian saying: Two friends are stronger than a stone-built wall. In the context of the ideogram of the *Soyombo*, they mean: Be the whole people on friendly terms and united and then be stronger than the wall of a fortress.[92]

'While this explanation is obviously grossly anachronistic,' comments Atwood (2004: 519), 'it preserved the symbol and is now widespread in Mongolia.'

Actually maybe thanks to Rinchen, just before Mongolia joined World War II in 1945 a new design for the flag was adopted and confirmed by a constitutional amendment on

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[92] Rinchen 1958: 15-16. First version in Mongolian in the periodical of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, *Sinjileküj uqayan*, IX, 1945.

February 1949. On this version, the golden *Soyombo*, without the lotus, was surmounted by a five-pointed golden star (Atwood 2004: 179). Still, discussing the seal Atwood (2004: 490) adds that, 'in the 1960 Constitution the aspirations to symbolize a modern economy returned; the wheat sheaves were restored, the animal busts removed, and an industrial cogwheel added at the bottom. The *Soyombo* symbol was, however, added to the star.'[93]

It is not surprising that the *Soyombo* should be in post-communist time more than ever a symbol of the greatness of the nation. As Atwood (2004: 490) described it, in 1992, with the new democratic constitution, the symbol of the nation was transformed to adapt to a renewed Buddhist symbolism in the coat of arms. 'The ribbon at the base became a lotus, the cogwheel became a *dharma* [scriptures] wheel intertwined with a *khadag* [ceremonial scarf], [94] the wheat sheaves became a swastika-based scroll (with a Buddhist, non-racial, meaning) and the 'three jewels' [the symbols of the *dharma*, the Buddha and the *sangha*] replaced the star. The horse became a *khii mori* (wind horse), or symbol of good fortune, carrying the *Soyombo* symbol over a blue surface symbolizing the sky.'[95]

The present sumptuous new State seal is a replica of the seal of Autonomous Mongolia, its imprint red and square, with the *Soyombo* at its centre, and the legend on both sides in the classical Uyghur-Mongolian script. The State seal, in the traditional Chinese style, has become in new Mongolia a nationalist symbol, demonstrating the unabated excellence and originality of the country and encouraging the revival of the oldest national traditions.

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[93] K. Sagaster (1978) gives a subtle analysis of the new interpretation of Buddhist symbolism at the beginning of the sixties; see especially on the *Soyombo* p. 508 and ill. 5, p. 509, pp. 516, 531, note 76.
[94] See Atwood 2004: 298.
[95] Bulag 1998: 211-50, gives reproductions of various State emblems with and without the *Soyombo,* from 1911 till 1992, with rich comments.

(a)   (b)

(a) Seal of the Emperor Xuantong (r. 1908-1912), in Chinese and Manchu seal-scripts.[96]

(b) Seal of the Ministry controlling civil affairs in Autonomous Mongolia, with the *Soyombo*. (Ölziidolgor 1999: 111)

(c) Seal of the President of the Republic of Mongolia, as used on a diploma in 2005, with the *Soyombo*.[97]

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[96] Published and translated by Stary 2006: 128, Nr 75 (we thank the author for allowing us to reproduce his picture).

[97] Private collection of this author.

Conclusion

The Chinese Imperial seal completing its march through the centuries and across Inner Asia as a patriotic symbol of the modern state is a conclusion that will come as a surprise to sinologists. The seeds of the ending, however, were present from the start and the evolution was a more or less direct process. The material object has retained its Chinese aspects into the post-Communist Mongolia of the early twenty first century, with a lion, a tiger or a dragon forming a handle and a red, square imprint. Although the message it delivers has changed when removed from the Chinese background, it is still impressive and awe-inspiring. In China's imperial times, the first function of a seal, whether imperial or administrative, was to authenticate the right to exercise power; its sight alone was sufficient to signify the authority of its holder. Under the Yuan, the Chinggisid dynasty of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the model of the Chinese seal was spread by the Mongolian conquerors as far as the Near East, another tool of state control, the tablets of command (Chinese *paizi*), fulfilled the function of demonstrating authority; seals, however, retained the function of authenticating documents and validating power. A fascinating characteristic of the seal in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the variety of languages and of scripts which could appear on the imprints.

At the end of the thirteenth century, counselors of the descendants of Chinggis Qan came to understand that the Chinese jade 'Seal which Transmits the Empire,' attributed to the founder of the Chinese Empire, Qin Shihuang, was a very effective tool to assert imperial authority. Thereupon, they transferred *a posteriori* onto Chinggis Qan the discovery of the alleged original seal and incorporated it into the Mongolian political culture under the name of *qaš buu*. A mythical construction was elaborated around it, which enhanced its magical qualities – magic by its origin as well as magic by its effects.

Later in Mongolia the suzerains of the Manchu Qing revived the use of administrative seals and the belief in a 'Seal which Transmits the Empire', supposedly cast by Qin Shihuang. A new stage was reached when the Eighth Jebcündamba

Qutuγtu, the Boγda Gegen of Urga, becoming the ruler of an Autonomous Mongolia freed in 1911 from the Sino-Manchu domination, used, instead of the old Imperial Seal, a new seal showing an emblem, the *Soyombo*, with its own rich symbolical meaning, which till nowadays is used to ratify decisions and authenticate documents.

I am aware that the story I have told is too sketchy, that I have left out many significant subsidiary issues, for instance the small black seals used for countersigning Ilkhanid documents bearing a royal red seal; the other Chinese means of controlling documents and actions such as tallies; the important question in China and Mongolia, in connection with etiquette, of the seal boxes and cases, and so on. But my intention, in these few pages, was to focus on a single line of development in order to make it more vivid.

Let us hand over the last words to the famous Mongolist Fr Antoine Mostaert, C.I.C.M. (1881-1971). While a missionary among the Mongols of Ordos, in Inner Mongolia, after the proclamation of the Republic of China, he witnessed how Chinese customs of the defunct Qing dynasty were carried on by the local Mongol princes: they continued to use bilingual seals, in Manchu and Mongolian, and maintained the habit of 'closing' the seal at the end of the year and of 'opening' it very ceremoniously at the beginning of the new year, delivering a speech in Mongolian relating the way Chinggis Qan got the *qas buu*, the Imperial seal, and observing an almost-Chinese ritual (Mostaert 1999 [1935]).

Is not this the epitome of dramatic transfer of technology and culture?

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Chapter 6

From Ongon To Icon: Legitimization, Glorification And Divinization Of Power In Some Examples Of Mongol Portraits[1]

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Due to the dramatic destruction of the Mongol artistic heritage in the twentieth century, coupled with a natural difficulty of preservation of art objects in a nomadic context, the history of Mongol art can only be patchily reconstituted on the basis of a few scattered works. Although it is not possible to elaborate a stylistic study and a chronological evolution of Mongol portraits, the few examples of religious portraits from the Mongol Empire to the Qing dynasty, preserved or known about through textual descriptions I have gathered here allow me to present some of the choices made by the Mongols in the uses and representations of their sovereigns' portraits in both sculpture and painting. I will try to understand what was their symbolic role in state ideology compared to other material representations of power, and to underline some common features of Mongol portraits.

Statues of Great Mongol Ancestors

The medieval Mongols worshipped portrait statues, and seem to have believed in an anthropomorphic survival of their former rulers. The oldest known representations of Mongol rulers were portrait statues of Chinggis Khan, recorded about 20 years after his death by thirteenth century travellers in the Mongol Empire.

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When Benedict the Pole encountered Batu (r. 1237-1256) at his camp on the lower Volga in 1246, he relates: 'beyond the (purifying) fires there stood a chariot bearing a golden statue of the Emperor, which also it is their custom to worship' (Dawson 1955: 80). Further east, in 1247, Plano Carpini describes an 'idol' (*idolum*) representing Chinggis Khan at Güyüg's camp in Central Mongolia. It stood on a cart, in front of the imperial tent, received numerous offerings of food, and was worshipped everyday at noon as their 'god'; horses were also consecrated to the effigy. Foreigners who refused to bow to the statue were killed (Plan Carpin/Becquet and Hambis 1965: 36-7).

Literary accounts give us other examples of emperors' statues kept in shrines. According to the Persian historian Rashīd ad-Dīn, images of the deceased *qan*s were also worshipped in the 'Great Forbidden Sanctuary' (Yeke Qoriɣ), the cemetery for Chinggisid nobility in the Hentii mountain range, and incense was constantly burnt before them (Rashīd ad-Dīn/Thackston 1998-1999: 464). Until the fourteenth or fifteenth century, rituals were performed up in a memorial temple at or near Burqan Qaldun. This was built by Qammala (1263-1302), a grandson of Qubilai, maybe on the right bank of the Avarga river (Delgerhaan sum, Hentii province) where ruins of a settlement with a temple and a palace have been identified (Rachewiltz 1997: 241-2, 252 note 38; Atwood 2004: 26-7). The images mentioned by Rashīd ad-Dīn could have been located in that same temple, or kept in the late *qan*'s *ordo*[2] (Barthold 1970: 214-15), which some archaeologists believe to have been located at the same place (Shiraishi 2006).

Temples with statues of great ancestors still existed at a later period. A statue of Chinggis Khan with a golden quiver containing arrows is mentioned in the *Erdeni-yin tobci* and the *Altan tobci* at the Eight White Tents in Ordos, around the time of Toɣon Taisi's death in the fifteenth century.[3] The great

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[2] The dead *qan*'s encampments were classified as *qoriɣ* (forbidden [sanctuary]), maintained by the late *qan*'s wives who continued to give a share of the presents to the deceased ruler.

[3] Saɣang Secen 1990 [1662], fol. 53 v°-54 r°; *Altan tobci*, 17th century, trans. Bawden 1955: 171.

academician Rinčen mentions two temples in Mongolia that existed until 1937, dedicated to the *sülde*, 'the Spirit of the Banner of Činggis Qan, where were performed sacrifices and Shamanist rites resembling those performed at the temple of Činggis Qan at Ejen Qoriy-a in Ordos.' They enshrined 'remarkable statues of Činggis Qan, his celebrated marshals, of the chiefs of vanquished peoples [...].'[4]

Unfortunately, none of these statues of Mongol rulers have survived. But hundreds of thirteenth and fourteenth (and perhaps also fifteenth) century stone statues still stand in the vicinity of tombs, especially in Shilingol league (Sili-yin γool league: Zhenglan and Abaγa banners) in Inner Mongolia, and in Sühbaatar (Dariganga sum), Dorngov', and Dornod provinces in Mongolia.[5] These Mongol 'stone men' (*hün čuluu*) belong to the same genre of funerary art as the stone figures of the Turks (552-742) and early Uyghurs (744-840) that still stand on the Eurasian steppe.

The Mongol statues are life-size figures of men and women, with usually one hand holding a stemmed cup, and the other resting on the left knee (fig. 1, in the plates following p. 260). Some of them hold a rosary in their left hand, others hold the cup with both hands. Their face generally looks towards the southeast. Their clothes and hats are comparable to those found in Yuan tomb mural paintings (such as the figures of Yuanbaoshan 元寶山; fig. 18), and to real robes and hats found in tombs. They also match descriptions found in the section on

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costume in the official *Yuan shi* (Yuan History):[6] male robes fastened to the right, with sleeves tight-fitting at the wrist, and a belt from which were suspended personal accessories, boots, caps or turbans.[7] The majority of them are sitting on a folding chair (*jiaoyi* 交椅) with a round back, armrests, and feet-support.

The Mongol stone men and funerary monuments in honour of dead nobles were not erected at the site of the grave itself but at some distance from it, in funerary enclosures much simpler than the ancient Turkic funerary complexes.[8] They are not tomb-markers, but their proximity to burial sites contrasts with what we know of the secret tombs of the Mongol aristocracy. In eastern Mongolia, the statues are usually found southeast of round stone platforms, ranging about 3 to 12m in diameter and from 0.4 to 1m in height (Bayar 2002 [1994]: Chap. 2). At Yangqunmiao 羊群廟, 35km northwest of Shangdu in Inner Mongolia,[9] four fourteenth-century sacrificial platforms made of rammed earth are lined up at the foot of a hill oriented northeast-southwest, each surrounded by a wall made of piled rocks (about 30m per side). Each compound has one marble statue standing about 3m from the southeastern edge of the platform, and protected by a ruined temple-like structure (fig. 2). To the west of this are four tombs, 500m from the nearest sacrificial platform (in other burial assembles near Shangdu, the statues stand south of the tombs). The five-claw dragons, clouds, and flowers decorating the robes of two of the stone statues make Chinese scholars think these sacrificial platforms were

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[6] *Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 78, 'Yufu zhi 輿服志 1': 1929-44. See Bayar 2002 [1994]: Chap. 4.

[7] Other statues are naked and/or androgynous with prominent male genitalia and breasts. I will not evoke here the assumptions that have been made about the nudity of Turkic and Mongol statues.

[8] See Kül Tegin's funerary enclosure, which comprised a temple with an approach avenue, anthropomorphic statues, steles, and animals' statues (Esin 1970: 90-1).

[9] Modern Zhenglan 正藍 banner, Sili-yin γoul league. See Nei Menggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Zhenglan qi wenwu guanlisuo 1994; Wei and Chen 1994; Ding 1994.

designed for emperors or members of the imperial family.[10] Yangqunmiao may have been an important religious site for the Mongol elite, perhaps the main sacrificial and burial site mentioned in *Yuan shi* as lying northwest of Shangdu, where emperors sacrificed to the Sky and to their ancestors at particular dates of the calendar.[11]

The Mongol stone men are believed to represent dead noble Mongols but their ethnic identity is still under discussion. Bayar (2002 [1994]) believes that because of their regional origin and dates, they were erected by the Önggüd or by the Qonggirad.[12] In the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, the Jalair, the Qonggirad and the Uruyud, enfeoffed by Chinggis Khan, had their cemeteries in the pasture zones of Huanzhou 桓州, Fuzhou 撫州 and Changzhou 昌州 (Shangdu and Abaya). But Qubilai also established within these rich pastures the city of Shangdu, with sacrificial and burial sites for the Mongol imperial family and nobility.[13] So indeed, these statues could be specific to certain tribes, but they could just as well be a mostly Chinggisid trait, or a practice shared among several tribes.

Feeding the Ancestors, Feeding the Ongons

Worshipped during sacrificial rituals, the statues were fed with meat and milk products. Mention of this is made by Plano Carpini, in his discussion of the effigy of Chinggis Khan. The Yuan dynasty stone statues generally hold a cup, like the Turkic statues, in which could be placed an offering of food or alcohol. They were also given offerings such as porcelains, cattle bones,

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[10] Ge 1999: 330; Wei and Chen 1994: 624.

[11] They poured alcohol of mare milk, bowed to the Sky, called the imperial name of Chinggis Khan and prayed (*Yuan shi, juan* 72, 'jisi 祭祀 1 – jiaosi 郊祀': 1781; *juan* 77, 'jisi 6 – Guosu jiuli 國俗舊禮': 1924).

[12] Atwood (2003: 520) assumes that the stone men 'show the gradual transformation of funerary beliefs during the Yuan under Buddhist and Confucianist influence.' But the above mentioned effigies of Chinggis Khan as well as the Turkic heritage seem to be a better explanation for the presence of stone figures near Yuan tombs.

[13] Ge 1999: 346, quoting the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* 聖武親徵錄: 166.

cereal in urns, bronze coins, or milk products, which were buried in small pits at the statues' side from the Yuan dynasty up to 1949. A Chinese poem of the Yuan period mentions a ritual during which the powerful imperial legate (*quanchen qincharen* 權臣欽差人) Temür 鐵木爾 from Yan 燕 (Hebei province) offers a sacrifice to the marble statue of a deceased Great Preceptor (*xiantaishi* 先太師) at a site 70 *li* northwest of Luandu 滦都 (i.e. Shangdu). Wine was poured into the statue's mouth and its body coated with fat, while in front of it a horse was butchered to provide the sacrificial meat. The officiant sang and beat time with his feet.[14] On the basis of the site it mentions, Chinese archaeologists believe the poem could be referring to one of the preserved statues, and therefore supports the assertion that Yangqunmiao was the sacrificial site northwest of Shangdu mentioned in the *Yuan shi*.

The two effigies of Chinggis Khan as well as the life-size stone statues[15] were used in ways similar to those employed with the smaller portable ongons (*ongɣun*), those roughly zoomorphic or anthropomorphic images made of various materials (such as felt, wood, metal, etc.). As we have seen with the larger statues, the ongon is fed and thus tamed and controlled. Consecration of horses to the effigy of Chinggis Khan in the way described by Plano Carpini is also a practice closely linked to ongons.[16]

The Mongols used to feed their ongons by smearing the mouth and sometimes the whole face with fat and cooked meat

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[14] Xu Youren 許有任, *Zhizheng ji* 至正集, *juan* 6: 'Pei you taifu taiping wang ji xian taishi shixiang' 陪右太夫太平王祭先太師像, quoted by Ge 1999: 335.

[15] In the open steppe, up to now, the Mongols generally consider stone figures, petroglyphs and deer stones as sacred images of ancestors and feed them like ongons (Zélénine 1952 [1936]: 29, 177).

[16] These horses were allowed to wander freely and never be ridden. Consecrating an animal was originally called *ongɣola- [ongɣula-]*, 'to make into an ongon, or sacred vessel,' and later renamed *seterle-* under Buddhist influence (Zélénine (1952 [1936]: Chap. 5).

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before each meal, then sprinkling and fumigating them.[17] In exchange, the spirit was thought to commit himself to honoring a contract thus created: protecting the household or clan and its sheep and cattle, bestowing prosperity, preventing sickness, and ensuring success in hunting. If he did not do these things, he could expect reprisals. An important feature in the definition of an ongon is that food maintains the spirit within the support of this inanimate object: the spirit remains within the ongon image only as long as he is fed. As Roberte Hamayon (1990: 404) noted for ninteenth century Buryats, 'c'est la nourriture qui maintient un esprit dans son support et [...] un esprit a besoin de son support pour être nourri; base du traitement rituel des *ongon*, elle est leur principal sinon unique élément commun fondamental, car varient formes et matières, procédés de genèse et de fabrication, modalités de culte et d'appartenance, esprits hébergés (animaux ou humains) [...].' Human spirits that could dwell in an ongon were either angry and potentially dangerous poltergeists or great ancestors.[18] The stone human statues and the effigies of Chinggis Khan, being specialized material matrices through which the dead could be fed, can therefore be included in the larger ongon category, and the stone cup-holding statues be compared to small bronze ongons dating from the Mongol Empire that also hold cups in their hand (fig. 3).

Inhabited Portraits

Mongol stone statues and ongons generally belong to the category of 'inhabited portraits' or 'animated portraits,' that is,

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[17] On different categories of ongons and their function: Zélénine 1952 [1936]; Beffa and Delaby 1999; Hamayon 1990: 403-25; Roux 1963: 124-31. For 13th century descriptions: Plano Carpini (Plan Carpin/Becquet and Hambis 1965: 36-7); and Rubrouck (Rubrouck/Rockhill 1900: 148-9). Considered by the Buddhist missionaries as the tutelary spirits of shamanism, the ongons were systematically destroyed in the late 16th and early 17th century, but were preserved by non-Buddhist Mongol groups. In 19th-century eastern Mongolia, they were often replaced by tablets modeled on the Chinese ancestor's cult (Heissig 1973 [1970]: 420).

[18] The commoners did not individually represent their dead, who instead were worshipped as a group.

images serving as a 'support' for the soul. Human representation in Mongolia was strongly linked to death and worship, and restricted to a few powerful personalities, particularly the divinized ancestors who protected the clan, the shamans, and potentially dangerous human spirits. [19] Anthropomorphic representation was therefore the object of a number of precautions and prohibitions. As late as the 1930s, the great ethnographer-cum-missionary Antoine Mostaert (1956: 293), who collected and recorded Ordos traditions, noticed that drawing a human figure was a sin (*mayu*, unfavourable). A man's representation was an effective means of action on the man himself. 'To get hold of a drawing/a photograph of someone would give magic power over him' (Mostaert 1941-1944: 220b). Even today, Mongols still never throw away photographs of human beings but prefer burning them (Delaplace and Micoud 2007: 23). Effigies used as a substitute for an ill person, or for the spirit of the illness, were manufactured for healing rituals in which the sick one was ransomed from death (Bawden 1994 [1961]: 237; Sarközi 1989: 316-18).

Thus, human figures were respected. They could not be used in less important contexts, such as decoration (Chabros 1987: 274). They were also feared. An animated statue is held to be able to act by itself and even kill. According to a seventeenth century description, a thangka[20] portrait of Chinggis Khan was said to kill if exposed or if denied proper sacrifices. [21] The *Erdeni-yin tobci* and the *Altan tobci* tell us that in the fifteenth century, the Western Mongol leader Toγon Taisi orally provoked and defied Chinggis Khan in front of his statue at the

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[19] On religious and magical functions of portraits in East Asia: Seckel 1999: 82 *sq.*

[20] Tib. *thang ka*, Buddhist painting or appliqué with a religious theme.

[21] The Fifth Dalai Lama visiting the palace of the *jinong* in Ordos relates: 'In the palace of the *jinong* was a thangka portrait of Chinggis Khan. I was told that if the portrait was revealed, people would die, so it had had to be offered blood sacrifices. Later that secret stuff (i.e. the portrait) was enveloped and left there within a case by Phagpa' ('Record of the Vth Dalai Lama visit to the capital,' in *Zhongguo Xizang* 中國西藏 1993/1, quoted by Hurcha 1999: 47).

Eight White Tents in Ordos, and was inexplicably struck down. An arrow of the statue's golden quiver was found stained with blood and a wound looking like that of an arrow discovered in his back.[22]

To sum up, the Chinggisid family worshipped portraits of their ancestors by offering them sacrifices, usually on their death days. The portraits of Chinggis Khan, unlike ongons, were also images of a divinized ruler that served to legitimize and sacralize the ruling power,[23] and were worshipped as gods. It is not known how far these statues were lifelike, but it is important to note that Chinggis Khan's statue at Batu's court was gilded or made of gold, the color of power par excellence in the nomadic world.[24]

The effigy was not the only support where the *qan*'s spirit could dwell and be worshipped: the same term – ongon – can also refer to the spirit of the dead itself, and to any material thing within which dwells the spirit of the dead: the grave, the coffin, the burial (*ongγula*-, 'to bury'), sacred places or animals dedicated to a spirit.[25] The *sülde* (usually translated as 'soul' or 'vital energy') of the Mongol sovereign could dwell in other supports as well, such as the standard, the relics (objects that once belonged to the *qan*), the burial place, a tree, etc. These objects protected the state and helped to defeat its enemies. The possession of these *sülde* supports for his dead ancestors (including statues), and the ability to perform rites for them, gave legitimacy and authority to the living ruler (Skrynnikova 1992-1993).

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[22] See above, note 3.

[23] In that respect they are comparable to the French medieval meaning of the term 'representation': Giesey (1987) showed that in the French medieval monarchy the verb 'représenter' meant 'rendre *à nouveau* present' during the funerals. The dead king was 'represented' by an effigy, a litter, a coffin, etc., so that the royal power would not remain vacant. On portrait as both a substitute for a person and considered as that person: Schneider 2002: 26; Belting 1998: 17 *sq*.

[24] Serruys 1962; Allsen 1997: 60-70; statues in gold are also mentioned for Kitan kings: Roux 1963: 124.

[25] Even 1999: 188, note 2, quoting examples from Ordos, and Tomka 1965: 165 and note 25.

Other kinds of 'inhabited portraits' were also used in the Inner Asian world. These would include iconic portraits (the painting or statue of a holy monk or an ancestor), Kitan manikins containing the ashes of the deceased, [26] and portrait-statues containing the relics (*šaril*, <sanskrit *śarīra*, residue of the cremation) of a holy monk. [27] The statues of Buddhist monks are believed to be alive thanks to a consecration ritual of eye-opening; though not directly fed they are presented offerings on a table. Modern lay Mongols also smear butter-offerings on Buddhist statues, as they do to nourish their ongons. The Yuan Mongols also occasionally buried in their tombs Chinese-style human substitutes (*mingqi* 明器 or *ouren* 偶人, 'body doubles,' 'statues,' 'idols') in clay. [28] These too belong to the category of 'inhabited portraits,' though they do not represent a specific person. [29]

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[26] The manikins found in the Xuanhua tombs were understood as a body where the deceased was believed to be permanently present, and received a burial that was not different from one a real corpse would have received (Shen 2005). They were in the tradition of the *mingqi* with movable limbs.

[27] Cf. Seckel's general survey on portraiture in East Asian art: 1997, introductory chapter; and 1999. For the history of the terms 'portrait,' 'image' and 'effigy' in Western art: Pommier 1998; Schneider 2002: 10.

[28] *Mingqi* dressed as Mongols have been found in the 14th-century tomb of the He 和 family, Hu 戶 district, Shaanxi (Steinhardt 1990-1991: 209). Ten terracotta *mingqi* (between 25 and 33cm high) are preserved in the Museum of Inner Mongolia in Hohhot: a cart with a tent-like roof, a camel with a packsaddle, a horse with a packsaddle, a saddled horse, two women and four men (three dressed as Mongols, one dressed as a Chinese). Nei Menggu bowuyuan and Zhonghua shijitan yishuguan (eds) 2004: 314. *Mingqi* do not seem to have been a common practice among Mongols; human sacrifices to serve the dead in the next world are occasionally mentioned for nobles' burials up to the late 16th century, and were then abolished as a result of the struggle of the Buddhist missionaries.

[29] In China, substitutes for humans (concubines, servants, soldiers, dancers...), animals, and objects that followed the deceased in the otherworld replaced the tradition of blood sacrifices during the last

Contrary to the common approach of Westerners to portraits, indeed their very definition of the term since the seventeenth century (Pommier 1998: 16-17: 'image de l'homme faite à sa resemblance'), it is not physiognomic likeness or verisimilitude that will interest us here. Instead, we will examine the destination, roles, codes and meanings of the 'personal images/effigies' of Mongol rulers. In the great majority of cases, the statues or paintings of *qan* and *qatun* are typical representations of rulers conforming to exemplary models, invested with personal identity by iconographic signs (emblems of rank, costume, position, attributes), or by an inscription. Klimkeit (1990: 193) showed that Buddhist donors are often depicted as a generic type because their 'portrait' is a representation of their mind in a 'Buddha Land,' remote in time and space from earthly places. Even if a certain degree of physiognomic likeness is achieved for Yuan court portraits, images are idealized because the ancestors are depicted in a supramundane level of existence, as shown by Stuart and Rawski (2001: 52, 58) for Chinese ancestors' paintings.

Two-Dimensional Portraits of Emperors Kept in Temples during the Yuan Dynasty

Paintings of rulers obviously do not have the same function as stone or metal effigies. Not directly fed, they cannot be called ongons. In different ways, however, they can also considered a support for an ancestor's soul ('inhabited portrait').

During the Yuan dynasty, the emperors adopted an ancestor cult based on Confucian lines, and built Ancestors' Temples (Tai miao 太廟) in the capital to keep the tablets of the deceased emperors as well as two-dimensional portraits. [30] Painted portraits of Mongol emperors were also placed in the

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centuries B.C.E. These substitute objects were 'believed to function among the dead and to embody a vital spirit' (Berger 1998: 49).

[30] *Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 74, 'jisi 3 – Zongmiao shang 宗廟上': 1831 *sq*. See Ratchnevsky 1970: 418, 423-4; Atwood (this volume). Franke (1994 [1978]: 30-1) showed the Mongols' reluctance towards the adoption of an ancestor cult organized along Chinese lines, and the Buddhicisation of the emperors' worship as early as 1268.

Hanlin Academy 翰林院. The earliest recorded portraits were commissioned by Qubilai Qan, who in 1278 and 1279 called to the court the Mongolian painter Qoryosun (Heli Huosun 和禮霍孫) to produce portraits of Chinggis Khan and his sons Ögedei and Tolui (Qubilai's father). When complete, these were placed in the Hanlin Academy.[31] In 1279, Qubilai Qan ordered the court painter Liu Guandao 劉貫道 (fl. 1279-1300) to make a portrait of his son and heir apparent Jingim / Zhenjin 真金 (Yuzong 裕宗, d. 1285). Satisfied with the likeness, he rewarded the artist with a position in the Imperial Clothing Office.[32]

During the reign of Temür (emperor Chengzong 成宗, r. 1294-1307), ancestral shrines called Halls of Imperial Portraiture (first called Yingtang 影堂, and then Shenyudian 神御殿 or Yurongdian 御容殿) were also erected, not as independent temples, but as buildings within the main imperial Tibetan Buddhist monasteries of Beijing.[33] Halls of Imperial Portraiture were thus built for Temür's deceased grandfather, Qubilai, (and his father Jingim, in the White Stupa monastery of Beijing (Da Shengshou wan'ansi 大聖壽萬安寺) and the Da Huguo renwangsi 大護國仁王寺. There their portraits were enshrined. These temples fell under the juridiction of the Office of Imperial Ancestral Worship. Hereafter, when an emperor died his own portrait hall was installed for him and his ancestors in the temple he had built.[34]

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[31] *Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 75, 'jisi 4 – Shenyu dian': 1876.
[32] Xia [preface 1365] 1914, *juan* 5: 4a; Weidner 1989: 39.
[33] *Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 75, 'jisi 4 – Shenyu dian': 1875. Tang emperors also had their images installed in Buddhist and Taoist temples.
[34] Temür and his empress' Yingtang was in the Da Tianshou wanningsi 大天壽萬寧寺; Qaišan (r. 1307-1311, Wuzong 武宗) and his two empresses' Yingtang was in the Da Chong'en Fuyuansi 大崇恩福元寺; the Yingtang of Toyan Temür (Shundi 順帝, r. 1333-1368) and his empress as well as that of Ayurbarwada (r. 1311-1320, Renzong 仁宗) and his empress were in the Da Puqingsi 大普慶寺, etc. (*Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 75, 'jisi 4 – Shenyu dian': 1875). Šudibala (Yingzong 英宗, r. 1320-1323) also built a Yingtang for Taizu 太祖 (Chinggis Khan)

Funerary tablets for former emperors and their consorts, as well as the portraits called *yurong* 御容, were kept in the Yingtang – no statues are mentioned. These portraits were quite unique, being silk tapestries (*kesi* 刻絲) of large dimensions, approximately 245x210cm (9½x8ft in Yuan measure). [35] Extremely costly and difficult to make, these woven images were thought to exhibit greater skill than painted ones.[36] Qubilai's posthumous woven portrait, commissioned by Temür in 1294, is the earliest recorded order. Supervised personally by the Minister of Works, a Uyghur by the sinicized name of Tang Renzu 唐仁祖 (1249-1301), this *yurong* took more than three years to complete in 1297.[37] It served as a model for later portraits and the chapter on paintings and sculpture in the *Jingshi*

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in the Xingjiao si 興教寺 (*Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 28, 'ben ji – Yingzong 英宗 2': 624). Portraits of Chinggis Khan and Ögedei Qan (Taizong 太宗) were displayed in the Da Puqingsi under Yesün Temür (Taiding 泰定, r. 1323-1328), etc. (*Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 29, 'ben ji – Taiding di 泰定帝 1': 650; *Yuan shi* 1976 [1370], *juan* 40, 'ben ji – Shundi 順帝 3': 853-4; see also *Yuandai huasu ji* [Yuan] 1964: 1).

[35] See, for instance, the order given on January 15, 1321, for the double portrait of Ayurbarwada and his consort, together with mandalas on the left and right sides, which specified that the portrait (in triplicate) should conform to the style of Qubilai's portrait, and that each copy should measure 9½x8 feet (*Jingshi dadian*, quoted by Watt and Wardell 1997: 96). These dimensions are the same as the dimensions of the Vajrabhairava mandala (see below).

[36] In an early version of the preface to the chapter on paintings and sculpture in the *Jingshi dadian*, it is said: 'to weave an image so that it seems to come alive is not something that can be equaled by the application of colors [in painting]. To make an image of clay is even more inferior. Thus human skill can match the wonder of nature' (Su [late Yuan period] 1958: *juan* 42: 618; passage translated by Watt and Wardell 1997: 60-1). On the importance of textile in the Mongolian world: Allsen 1997.

[37] *Yuan shi*, *juan* 134, 'liezhuan 列傳 – Tang Renzu 唐仁祖': 3253-4.

dadian 經世大典[38] records several other orders for portraits of the emperors and empresses to be painted and converted to woven silk.[39]

The large portraits of emperors and empresses have not been preserved, but the famous painted album called *Yuandai dihou xiang* 元代帝后像 of the Nanxun dian 南薰殿 collections in the Imperial Palace (now kept in the National Palace Museum in Taipei) gives us an idea of what the portraits looked like. Measuring roughly 60cm in height and 47cm in width, these half-length painted portraits were obviously not designed for public use (fig. 4A, 4B).[40] It is believed that they could have served as the models for enlarged portraits in both painting and textile.

If the general stylistic models for the portraits are obviously the portraits of earlier Chinese monarchs kept in the imperial collections and highly valued by the Yuan emperors, technical and stylistic features such as the method of describing highlights on the jewels of the portrait of Cabui (d. 1281) (fig. 4B), and the thick coat of painting, show a Himalayan

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[38] A great Yuan dynasty administrative encyclopedia, ed. by Yu Ji 虞集 and Zhao Shiyan 趙世延, compiled by order of emperor Tuɣ Temür in 1329.

[39] In some of these, it is specified that woven portraits were to be made immediately upon the completion of the painted portraits. On these detailed orders and the officers and workshops in charge of their supervision and execution, see Watt and Wardell 1997: 6061.

[40] The album is described in imperial catalogues such as the 18th century *Shiqu baoji* 石渠寶笈 (*juan* 3). Mostaert (1927) gives one of the earliest descriptions of the portraits based on photographs of the Gugong portraits sold by a Beijing printing house. Dong Tang (1962), who lists the mentions of this album in Qing dynasty imperial catalogues, together with other specialists, believes that these portraits are Ming copies. Modern scholars seem now to agree on a Yuan date (Weidner 1989: 41; Jing 1994; Yu 2000: 32; Shi and Ge (ed.) 2001: 288; Wang 2005: 298-301). The album format is 18th century, the paintings having been remounted in 1748.

influence.[41] The album portraits of later emperors have been done in similar style by Chinese artists of the imperial workshops, such as the portraits made in 1332 by Li Xiaoyan 李肖岩 (for the faces) and lesser craftsmen (for the hats, hair and robes). The costumes, hats and the hair braided into a few loops hanging behind the ears are all characteristic of Mongol portraiture.[42]

Other isolated half-length portraits that have been preserved include a portrait of Chinggis Khan bought by the Beijing Museum of History in 1953,[43] which is nearly identical to his portrait in the album, and a portrait of Qubilai from a thirteenth century original preserved in the Confucius temple at Qufu 曲阜 (Shandong province).[44] These paintings, as well as the figure of Qubilai in the hanging scroll *Qubilai Qan Hunting* (kept in the Palace Museum and attributed to Liu Guandao), where the emperor looks much younger,[45] allow us to say that the likeness of the portrait was relatively important.

It is not known if the emperors' two-dimensional large portraits received any kind of consecration, but their location in a

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[41] In his article based on Anige's official epitaph (Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫, 1249-1318, *Liangguo minhui gong shendao bei* 涼國敏慧公神道碑, written under Ayurbarwada's order of 1316), Jing (1994) argues that the portraits of Qubilai and Cabui in the painted album are original works by Anige 阿尼哥 (Arniko, 1245-1306). In 1301, Anige also made posthumous textile portraits of Temür's parents (the late heir apparent Jingim and his wife).

[42] The costume and hat of Qubilai (fig. 4A) are comparable to those of the Yuanbaoshan man (fig. 17).

[43] Dong (1962), quoting an expert on the portrait, believes it could be the above-mentioned portrait painted by Qoryosun. It comes from a Mongol princely residence. The album portrait of Chinggis Khan could be a copy of the earlier portrait by Qoryosun, or derive from the same model.

[44] Waley 1923: pl. xxx. Qubilai was a great benefactor of the Confucian temple, which he restored in 1278.

[45] This famous equestrian composition bears Liu Guandao's signature and the date 1280; yet Weidner (1989: 40) demonstrates that it could have been painted at a later date.

monastery and the rites performed in front of them show that they were considered as having a status between Buddhist icons and Chinese ancestor painting. The portraits in painting were always produced in triplicate or (more rarely) in duplicate and distributed to Buddhist monasteries across China as formal displays of the sovereign's image. There was thus a multiplication of two-dimensional images of deceased emperors, sculpture being apparently excluded.

The Halls of Imperial Portraiture also displayed mandalas with imperial portraits. The same size as the individual imperial portraits, these were also made as *kesi* and were woven in the same imperial workshops.[46] One of these mandalas – the Vajrabhairava (or Yamāntaka) mandala (ca. 1328-1329) is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 5).[47] In the bottom left and right corners of the thangka, two small groups of worshippers are identified by Tibetan inscriptions as emperor Tuɣ Temür (emperor Wenzong 文宗, r. 1329-1332), and his elder brother Qosila who reigned briefly in 1329 as emperor Mingzong 明宗 (fig. 6A), along with their respective consorts, Budasiri and Babuša, wearing rich costumes and hats (fig. 6B). The portrait of Tuɣ Temür seems indeed to be based on his portrait kept in the Taipei album.

Although the album paintings are half-length, the enlarged, finished portraits hung in the Hall of Imperial Portraiture were certainly full figures, probably in a seated position (on a chair?); in the Chinese ancestor paintings and in the Buddhist tradition, one would never worship partial portraits.[48] We can imagine the interior of the Hall of Imperial

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[46] The *Yuandai huasu ji* ([Yuan] 1964: 1) and the *Jingshi dadian* (see note 36) mention imperial portraits together with mandalas. Also Weidner 1989: 41; Watt and Wardell 1997: 98.

[47] Watt and Wardell (1997: 95-100, cat. n°25) assume that the *kesi* was commissioned before 1330, and completed after 1332; Stoddard (1995: 209) and Ge (2001: 256, 264 notes 95-97) propose 1328 or 1328-1329.

[48] Jing (1994: 75) asserts that they 'must have been painted in seated position on Buddhist platforms, as is indicated in literary sources,' and quotes only one source, the *Yuandai huasu ji* ([Yuan] 1964: 1), that mentions three imperial portraits, together with three *'fotan'* 佛壇. He

Portraiture of a large imperial monastery: 2.5m high woven portraits of deceased emperors and empresses were hung together with woven mandalas of the same size (to the left and right of the portraits). Their name tablets would be placed on an altar.

Two-Dimensional Portraits of Princes during the Northern Yuan Dynasty (1368-1634)

Temples are also known to have preserved two-dimensional portraits of Mongol *qans* after the fall of the Yuan dynasty. The fortified Mayidari monastery (Mayidari-yin Juu, Ch. Meidai zhao 美岱召), 70km west of Hohhot (Kökeqota), preserves in the rear part of its main temple a large seventeenth century mural painting of donors,[49] in which Chinggisid nobility is represented below a 7-meter high painting of Tsongkhapa (Charleux 1999) (fig. 7). The painting represents the two princesses who patronized this monastery – one of the oldest of the Buddhist revival: on the right side on Tsongkhapa's throne, Jönggen Qatun (known in Chinese as Sanniangzi), Altan Qan's famous third wife (ca. 1550-1612) faces her third husband Cürüke, who bends towards her in a respectful attitude (fig. 8A, 8B).[50] On the other side of the painting, the princess Maciɣ Qatun (ca. 1546-1625) faces the Mayidari Qutuɣtu (1592-1635), a Tibetan viewed as a reincarnation of Maitreya who had been sent to Hohhot in 1604. Completing the scene are fifty-eight laymen and monks of much smaller size – turned towards the central characters, most sitting in *padmāsana* in a worshipping attitude – as well as two divinities. The painting is laden with Buddhist symbols such as piles of jewels, the eight auspicious symbols, etc.

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concludes saying 'obviously, each imperial portrait was matched with one Buddhist platform' (his note 171). I disagree with Jing's translation, because *fotan* ('Buddhist altar') designates here a mandala (like fig. 5), and not 'Buddhist platforms' where a figure would be sitting.
[49] The painting can be dated to the temple restoration of 1606, but was probably restored after 1632-1634 following a fire.
[50] Both of them patronised the translation of the *Kanjur* into Mongolian from 1602 to 1607.

Jönggen Qatun was also depicted on eight large hanging scrolls in the Mayidari monastery, now lost, as an old woman sitting on a throne, and receiving the homage of courtiers or surrounded by scenes of travel or entertainment.[51] The Mayidari-yin Juu paintings provide assertion of the incontestable authority of Jönggen Qatun and her legitimacy to rule the Tümed. Contained as well within the mural painting are Buddhist donors, a depiction of the adoration of Jönggen Qatun, and a commemorative painting (Charleux 1999). The Mayidari-yin Juu had, by the early seventeenth century, become the funerary temple of Altan Qan's family, whose members were buried in the Qarayuna mountains north of the monastery. The monastery also preserved the sandalwood funerary stupa of one of the two princesses, perhaps Jönggen Qatun, which was worshipped together with the eight large scrolls in the Empress Temple (Taihou miao 太后廟, or Lingta dian 靈塔殿, Hall of the Miraculous Stupa). The stupa contained ten human tresses and two small chests containing bones, ashes, turbans, hats, shoes, combs, and knives (all of which were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution). The monks perpetuated the cult of Altan Qan's family ancestors up to the early twentieth century: every year after the Mongolian New Year, they performed rituals for the Empress and members of Altan Qan's family in the Taihou miao, which was open only five days a year.

A second example of post-Yuan portraits is a series of three paintings of Abatai Qan (1554-1588), the Tüsiyetü Qan of the Qalqa, who with his family was depicted on a wall at Erdeni Juu monastery (in present-day Mongolia). They are known from copies made by the painter Dendev in 1950; the originals have not been preserved and I do not know where they were located in the monastery. The Tüsiyetü Qan is depicted sitting cross-legged on a cushion or carpet, in a frontal position, alone or with his wife, receiving the homage of monks and laymen (fig. 9).

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[51] Each was 1 *zhang* long, 2 *chi* large, that is, 3.2x0.64m. These were still preserved 70 years ago, before having been purchased by a 'foreign monk' (Rong 1979 [1957]: 227; Amuer Batu 1997: 278).

Abatai Qan, the founder of the monastery, was buried at the Erdeni Juu. Like the Mayidari-yin Juu, this monastery became, after the death of its founder, a funerary shrine where Chinggisid ancestors were worshipped. It was also the largest of the Qalqa monasteries. The strange square-shaped stupa-tombs of Abatai Qan and his son Gombodorji stand directly in front of the Three Temples of Erdeni Juu. Abatai's large *ger*, in which were preserved his throne, weapons, and statues of 'fierce heroes' ('the fellow-champions of Abatai'), was also worshipped here before being moved to Da Küriye (the future Urga) by the first Jebcündamba Qutuɣtu (Pozdneev 1971 [1892]: 60-1 does not mention a statue of Abatai Qan). In the two examples of Mayidari-yin Juu and Erdeni Juu, it is not clear if the *qan* and *qatun*'s paintings were made before or after their death. Whenever they were made, however, they certainly served as commemorative and votive paintings for the rulers' descendants.

A third example comes from the Arjai caves in Otoɣ banner in Ordos territory, Inner Mongolia. Artwork had been produced in the caves since the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), and they were probably a Tanggut (Xia dynasty) monastery before the Mongol conquest. Paintings have been preserved there, as well as stupas containing monks' ashes, and Mongolian, Tibetan and Sanskrit inscriptions identified as eulogies to Buddhist deities (cave 32). The cave monastery together with the Yuan dynasty temple above the cliff were destroyed at an unknown date (Batu Jirigala and Yang Haiying 2005).

Chinese and Mongol archaeologists have proposed that the temple above the caves was a shrine to perform rituals for Chinggis Khan,[52] and believe that Arjai was a major Chinggisid sacrificial and pilgrimage site under the Yuan dynasty (Batu Jirigala and Yang Haiying 2005: Conclusion). It has even been

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[52] In 1226, Chinggis Khan was wounded while he was hunting in what has been identified as the Arbas mountains (in Otoɣ banner, near Arjai). Batu Jirigala and Yang Haiying (2005: 42-6) as well as other scholars have tried hard to identify place names in the *Secret History* and in Rashīd ad-Dīn's account – Arbuqa, Coɣurqad ('many caves'), Ongɣon dalai qudduɣ – with modern place names and local legends.

suggested that Arjai was the headquarters of the cult of the Eight White Tents and of the Chinggisid family (Solongγod 1999).

Much has been written about a painting (120x50cm) allegedly representing Chinggis Khan's family, located in Cave 28 (fig. 10). In this piece, a procession of a hundred people worship eight individuals sitting on a large white platform under a dark tent or an architectural monument, in front of a table covered with offerings. Although there is no inscription, the archaeologists believe that the Cave 28 painting of is a Yuan dynasty 'imperial portrait' (*yurong*) used for sacrificial rites, and have agreed to identify the main characters as Chinggis Khan, surrounded by his main wife Börte Üjin (on his right) and his other two wives Qulan and Yisügen (on his left); according to this interpretation, the four figures sitting farther on Chinggis' left would be his sons (Joci, Caγadai, Ögedei, and Tolui). The worshipping figure sitting below on the left and leading people offering camels and horses would be his fourth wife, Yisüi.[53]

This interpretation of the Arjai site seems to underestimate the entirely Buddhist character of the site. It is important to notice that the so-called painting of 'Chinggis Khan's family' covers only a small part in the lower register of the south wall, to the right of the entrance, under a large figure of Vaiśravaṇa sitting in royal ease.[54] Its location implies that the main object of worship was not 'Chinggis Khan' – if it is indeed he who is depicted in the painting – but either a Buddhist lay donor or, because of his three-fold crown that recalls a lama's tiara, a Tantric priest performing a ritual. The cave itself is dedicated to tutelary deities in sexual union, and to Tibetan masters on seats or meditating in caves: it may have functioned as a *mgon khang* (a shrine for the tutelary deities and wrathful protectors), and laymen were perhaps not even allowed inside. The conical hats, the costumes, and the general style and composition suggest a much later date, Northern Yuan or Qing dynasty.

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[53] Batu and Yang 2005: 81-2; Wang, Batu and Zhang 1994: 573-4.
[54] The main deities being represented on the north wall, the south wall is therefore the less prestigious.

Cave 31, dedicated to Śākyamuni, is also probably dated from the Northern Yuan or Qing. Here, monks (some wearing Gelugpa hats) and laymen are depicted under a painting of Vaiśravaṇa located on the south wall to the left of the door (fig. 11). They also figure as Buddhist donors but here are represented in a narrative context.

Arjai was thus above all a Buddhist monastery, where Chinggis Khan may also have been worshipped after his death. The assertions that the Arjai caves were a major site for familial worship of Chinggis are mostly supported by local legends. In the present state of research, they lack supportive evidence. What we have here, instead, is a Buddhist site where representations of Mongol nobles combine icons for ancestor worship with portraits of small-scale worshipping donors, two genres already common, if not necessarily combined, during the high Yuan period. My interpretation is supported by the evidence of the other frontally sitting donors at Mayidari-yin Juu and Erdeni Juu, which simultaneously are worshipping and being worshipped.

Other lost paintings of nobles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are known thanks to literary sources, such as a portrait of Altan Qan with his standard, seen by Žamcarano in 1910 at Saraci.[55] A portrait of Chinggis Khan's brother's Qasar, allegedly painted in blood, was worshipped in his shrine in Muumingan (Mayumingyan) banner (Ulaanchab / Ulayancabu league), along with sixteenth century texts (Möngkedelger 1998: 38-47).[56] The shrine was re-opened in the 1980s and his descendants perform rituals including blood sacrifice and performance of archery.

Paintings of Mongol Rulers in the Qing Dynasty

Mongol portraits of the Qing period came under new influences from Sino-Manchu and Buddhist arts. Portraits of religious figures, executed with various materials (painting, appliqué, statue, embalmed corpse), underwent extraordinary

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[55] Heissig 1954: 101, note 2, quoting Žamcarano Ceveen 1913: 46.
[56] I thank Christopher Atwood and Marie-Dominique Even for this information.

developments. Lay portraits, on the other hand, were reduced to a few small donors at the bottoms of the paintings. Formal portraits of monks show a particular interest in individual portraiture (see the portraits of the Jebcündamba Qutuɣtus for instance, and particularly Zanabazar's self-portraits). The influence of Western painting and photography in the early twentieth century gave rise to still other styles.[57]

Ancestor portraits did not disappear, but portraits of *qan*s and *qatun*s were replaced by individual ancestor portraits in the Sino-Manchu style, such as the portraits of banner princes (*jasaɣ*) – without their wives – which were kept in the Ancestor Hall of their residence or the family's monastery. Preserved in the Moroi-yin Süme (Khorchin Darkhan Vang banner, Inner Mongolia), for instance, the Ancestor Hall for the ruling family – a seven-bay Chinese-style temple covered with green glazed tiles – are full-length portrait paintings of twelve generations of princes, to which offerings were proferred (Charleux 2006: monastery no.145). New portraits reflect ancestors' cults that had become increasingly genealogical and patriarchal.

A few great ancestors were also depicted in thangka-like paintings. A late Qing dynasty portrait of Chinggis Khan, riding a horse and wearing an armor, a quiver with arrows, and brandishing a banner decorated with a swastika, was recently discovered at Badɣar Coyiling Süme (Wudang zhao 五當召) in Inner Mongolia (see Wang, n. d.).[58] Chinggis Khan, who was incorporated in the Buddhist pantheon during the seventeenth century as an incarnation of Vajrapāni and a son of Buddhist deities, was also represented in the form of the deity

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[57] See the portraits of the Eight Jebcündamba (1870-1924), his consort and others in Tsultem 1986: fig. 176-178.

[58] A portrait of Chinggis Khan painted by Danjin Rabjai (Ravjaa, 1803-1856) can be seen in the Sainšand Museum dedicated to the great Noyan Qutuɣtu. I thank Christopher Atwood for this information. See also a painting preserved at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, which has been identified as a 'domestic god' (Heissig 1973 [1970]: 419, fig. 10), or as Chinggis Khan (Eggebrecht *et al.* 1989: ill. p. 168).

Sülde tngri (Heissig 1973 [1970]: 454, fig. 13) and as a peaceful *cakravartin* sovereign.

Three Qing dynasty thangkas or thangka-like paintings representing Chinggisid ancestors deserve a special mention. The first two examples are Buddhist paintings, the third is strongly influenced by thangkas. In fig. 12, Abatai Qan appears in an imaginary palace above his monastery, Erdeni Juu, surrounded by miniature scenes from his life. The central figure and his attendants are in fact elements copied from three of the four paintings of Abatai Qan at Erdeni Juu – see the equerries holding unsaddled horses, the two wrestlers, the standard with bow, arrows and quiver on the *qan*'s left side, and the same old man with a staff, who seems to be pushed and helped by other attendants, trying to present a cup on the left. But here, Abatai has a *vajra*-topped hat and holds lotuses carrying a sword and a *vajra*: the king is depicted alone, without his wife, with the attributes of a bodhisattva. His position, palace and courtiers mirror that of the king of Shambhala in nineteenth century thangkas.

In a thangka that is the main object of worship in the ancestors' shrine of Qutuγtai Secen Qong tayiji (1540-1586) and Saγang Secen (1604-?) in the Ordos, Chinggis Khan is depicted as a ferocious protective deity (*dharmapāla*), topped by three lamas (fig. 13). Brandishing a short sword in his right hand and holding a snare in his left, he wears a leopard skin over his armor. Below him stands Qutuγtai Secen Qong tayiji, and on the right, breaking the general symmetry, sits Saγang Secen, in a three-quarters view, smaller than his grandfather. The distinction is striking between the remote ancestor – the fierce *dharmapāla* Chinggis Khan, surrounded by flames – and his two famous descendants, ancestors more recent, who are depicted as motionless human-like figures, engaged in ceremony.

One last piece to be mentioned would be a vertical painting of the imperial family, which some have claimed to be a Yuan painting. Preserved in the 'mausoleum' of Chinggis Khan at Ejen Qoriya (in the Ordos), this represents Chinggis Khan with his main wife surrounded by sons or courtiers (fig. 14). Because of the thangka format, however, as well as the general style, the individual thrones with headboards, the Buddhist halo,

the Buddhist style offerings such as jewels, and the hats and costumes so different from Yuan models but close to the Arjai painting of 'Chinggis Khan's family,' the painting should be dated to the Qing dynasty.

Between Worshipped Ancestors and Worshippers

Over time, Mongol sovereigns were depicted in three different roles. First, as the main subjects of the painting, the deceased emperors and other Chinggisid ancestors were worshipped through portraits where they appeared alone (fig. 4A, 4B); surrounded by courtiers, servants or sons presenting offerings (fig. 14); or in the middle of a complex thangka (fig. 12). This last sub-type shows that Buddhism played a prominent role in legitimizing Mongol rule: Abatai Qan is explicitly depicted with the specific attributes of a bodhisattva, recalling the thangkas of emperor Qianlong depicted as an emanation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

Secondly, the same sovereigns can be depicted as humble Buddhist lay donors, in a three-quarters view, turned towards a larger image of the Buddha. Of small size, these representations of the monarch are often located at the bottom of votive paintings. This classical subject was common in Buddhist painting long before the Mongols appeared, as seen for instance in Dunhuang 敦煌 and Yulin 榆林 cave mural paintings.[59] Continuing this tradition, in cave n°332 at Mogao 莫高 (Dunhuang), Yuan dynasty Mongol donors are painted on the two sides of the entrance, lined up behind each other, and facing the main Buddha image.[60] These portraits were commissioned first to obtain merit for the donors or their family members, but

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[59] Soymié 1999; Russel-Smith 2005: 193-7; Wiercimok 1990; Klimkeit 1990. This is also a classical subject in Christian art: see the conventional portrait of Richard II (1367-1400) of England kneeling before a Madonna and Child in the 'Wilton Diptych' (National Gallery, London).

[60] Tonkō bunbutsu kenkyūjo hen 1980-1982, vol. 5, fig. 161-162. In cave n°2 at Yulin, Mongol male donors are painted on the south wall, female donors on the north wall.

also to commemorate their donations as a token of their generosity to the public.

In the mandala of Vajrabhairava, the emperors are represented as very small-scale worshippers, joining their hands in the worshipping gesture (*añjali*), and sitting in the lower corners, on the same level as the protectors of the Dharma (*dharmapāla*), under a large Buddhist figure, while twelve Tibetan lamas are depicted at the top of the thangka (fig. 5). The emperors face their empresses in a three-quarters view. This representation of worshipping emperors strikingly contrasts with the large imperial portraits that were hung in the same hall.

In a third type of portrait, the Mongol *qan* and/or *qatun* appear as Buddhist donor in the bottom of a larger Buddha image, and at the same time as an ancestor worshipped by smaller figures. He/she adopts the frontal position of the *cakravartin* king, [61] while the monks are in a position of inferiority in relation to the Chinggisid ruler (fig. 7). In the Mayidari-yin Juu painting, the Tümed princess Jönggen Qatun sits in a frontal position. Her jewellery, the yellow color of her robe, her large earlobes, the *amrita* (ambrosia) vase she holds, all evoke a bodhisattva or a Buddha (fig. 8B). The two small Indian-style monks on each side who bow towards her recall Śākyamuni's disciples. Jönggen Qatun, on the other hand, was in the colophons of sutras' translations identified as an emanation of Tārā. The lower position of the Mayidari Qutuγtu and of the other monks illustrates the unequal relationship between the lay donor and the lama.

As Hans-Joachim Klimkeit (1990: 191) stresses about Turfan donors in frescoes, 'the position of their images within the sanctuary' is 'of decisive importance in the self-understanding of the donors.' In Mayidari-yin Juu, the location of the painting on the western side of the entrance at the same level as the viewer's eyes, as well as its large size (16x2m), show the donors' importance – they are no longer small humble figures on a side as in the mandala of Vajrabhairava (the painting

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[61] In Buddhist paintings, the lay persons adopting a frontal position are kings: the universal monarch (*cakravartin* king), the king of Shambhala.

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is much larger than Arjai's painting of 'Chinggis Khan's family').

In the same category of ancestors-cum-donors, the main characters of the Arjai paintings in Caves 28 and 31 sit frontally, while the others, slightly turned towards him, make the worshipping gesture. In both cases they are located under a larger Buddhist icon (fig. 10, 11). The painting of Abatai Qan at Erdeni Juu was probably also located under or at the side of a larger Buddhist deity: in one of the scenes, ten men, sitting or kneeling in a respectful attitude and presenting cups full of offerings pay homage to what was probably a Buddha or a divinity. Abatai and his wife are the only frontal characters. In fig. 13, Qutuɣtai Secen is depicted as a divinized ancestor but his location below the divinized Chinggis Khan makes him a kind of emanation or incarnation of Chinggis Khan, while Saɣang Secen stays discreetly in the background. Although they have obviously a different status in the painting, the sacrifices and prayers made in their shrine were addressed to all three of the ancestors at the same time.

The iconic frontal representation and size of Mongol donors after the Yuan dynasty seems to be an innovation in Buddhist painting, and contrasts with the usual three-quarters posture of Central Asian, Chinese and Tibetan worshippers as seen in the Dunhuang (Soymié 1999; Russel-Smith 2005; Wiercimok 1990) and Turfan caves (Klimkeit 1990), the Tibetan temples of Western Tibet (the temples and caves of Guge)[62], and in Tibetan thangkas.[63]

The Enthroned Couple

The Mongols made eclectic choices when representing their rulers, borrowing themes from the Chinese, Turkic, Uyghur and other traditions, while rejecting others. A major difference with

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[62] Cf. a painting of Cave 126, district 4, showing the royal family – two men and two women – sitting in front of three offering tables and attended by servants (Jin 1991: fig. 177).
[63] See the donors at the bottom of a thangka of Vajradhārā, Eastern Tibet, late 17th century, private collection of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth (in Rhie and Thurman 1991: 360, cat. 148).

previous Inner Asian portraits of kings in regalia is that in paintings the Mongol ruler is often depicted with his main wife, both being the same size (fig. 9, 11, 14, 19).[64] A similar arrangement, found in Ilkhanid manuscript paintings, shows the enthroned king with his queen in an open-air courtly reception, especially in the *Jami 'al-tavarikh* (Compendium of chronicles) by Rashīd ad-Dīn, painted in the early fourteenth century (fig. 15 and 16) – it is particularly noteworthy that when books from the same milieu (e.g. the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, the Book of Kings) represented the ancient kings of the past, pre-Mongol conventions were followed.

In Qing period Mongol paintings of the Seven Jewels of the universal (*cakravartin*) monarch, the queen and the minister are depicted on an equal footing, on the right and left (or left and right) of the wish granting jewel and the *cakra*. This disposition is not seen in Tibetan painting.[65] Even when the universal monarch himself is not depicted, the symmetrical arrangement of the queen and the minister is an obvious reference to the enthroned royal couple.

The representation of couples is also found in several Yuan tomb paintings uncovered in northern China and Inner Mongolia (fig. 17 and 18).[66] These portraits follow a Kitan-Liao (907-1125) and Jürchen-Jin (1115-1234) tradition of tomb

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[64] The Turkic stone figures sometimes are also arranged as couples (see the tomb of Bilge Qaghan), but in the old Turkic world, the monarch is represented sitting alone on the throne (Esin 1970: 79).

[65] Tsultem 1986: fig. 125, top right; and three other paintings of the Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum: n°50809, 50817, 50818 on the 'Himalayan Art Resources' website: http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1176.

[66] In Inner Mongolia: Yuanbaoshan (30km east of Chifeng city: Xiang Chunsong 1983); Sanyanjing 三眼井 (Chifeng municipality: Xiang and Wang 1982); Houdesheng 後德勝, Liangcheng county, Hohhot municipality (Nei Menggu zizhiqu wenhuating wenwuchu and Wulanchabu meng wenwu gongzuozhan 1994). In Shaanxi province: Pucheng 蒲城 (fig. 16). In Shanxi province: Beiyukou 北峪口 (Wenshui 文水 district, late Yuan or early Ming: Shanxi sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1961). The tombs' architecture is that of standard simple Chinese tombs (Steinhardt 1990-1991).

decoration, itself modelled on a Chinese tradition reaching back to the Han dynasty. Usually covering the north wall, the portraits of the tomb occupants are flanked by smaller male and female servants. The man and his wife face inward in a three-quarters pose and sit on stools or on a folding chair. In the Pucheng tomb, the tomb mistress is a Sino-Mongol wearing the elaborate *boγtaγ* (Ch. *gugu* 姑姑) headdress. In the other tombs the women all look Chinese by their garments, headdress and pose. These couples are probably partly sinicised Mongols, Sino-Mongol couples, or Mongols who chose to be depicted in the Chinese fashion, with Chinese furniture and vessels. The other elements in these portraits – such as the architecture, screens, back curtain, and tables that render the domestic atmosphere – are not seen in the statues or paintings of these sovereigns' ancestors, and are proper to the genre of Chinese tomb paintings. They show that the tomb occupants have a comfortable life, surrounded by servitors.[67]

At court as well as in the yurt, Mongolian women traditionally sat to their husband's left, the right being the honorific place in the Mongolian world. In the Taipei album, the emperors' faces are slightly turned to the right and the empresses' faces to the left, so we can assume that the emperors and empresses portraits were hung side by side or facing each other, forming an equal pair, the wife seated to her husband's left (fig. 4A, 4B). The same arrangement is found in tomb paintings such as Yuanbaoshan tomb (fig. 18), where the coffins also adopt the same disposition.

The reverse, seen in two tomb murals (Beiyukou and Sanyanjing), seems to be an 'anomaly,' probably a Chinese influence. In a unique political document dated 1580 depicting Altan Qan and his wife, the *qatun* sits on the *qan*'s right (fig. 19A, 19B).[68] In this case, the switched position might have been

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[67] The interpretation of these paintings is still under discussion: the life of the wealthy on earth or in the other world, the scene of worship, homage to the deceased, or the funeral banquet offered by the descendants after death.

[68] This horizontal scroll, now preserved in the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, is a Chinese-style painting accompanying a letter addressed

intended to fit with Chinese customs, and to please the Ming emperor to whom it was destined. Or else, the letter was rewritten and redrawn by the Ming officials in order to present a formatted document to satisfy the requirements of the Ming court, a usual practice for this kind of document. Except for this detail, the representation of the *qan* and his wife remarkably fits with the Mongol conventions: they sit cross-legged under a yurt, holding rosaries, and receive offerings from kneeling courtiers and servants. The *qatun*, probably Jönggen Qatun, is slightly smaller than Altan Qan.

In other cases, the position of power of a woman such as Jönggen Qatun, or her great age, can reverse the usual gender position. A related question is the fastening of garments on the right that served as a basic ethnic marker distinguishing Mongols from Chinese. Only the male occupant of the Pucheng tomb painting, who comes from Hebei, has a garment fastened to the left, as does his attendant.

But why choose to paint the couple to represent the Qan's power? One could argue that the tombs' couple portraits were modelled on the Kitan and Jürchen tomb painting that had influenced Mongol representations of power. But the tomb portraits were produced by provincial artists, were seen by the living only on the funeral days, and are particular to a small geographical area in Northern China and Inner Mongolia. Rather than borrowed art styles, the explanation should instead be sought in the role of women in Mongol society and in the Mongolian conception of power. The *qatun* of the Mongol Empire up to the seventeenth century enjoyed a certain authority, independence and privilege, appeared in public with the ruler, participated in feasts, and took part in the *quriltai*.[69] They had their own residence (*ordo*), which was sometimes large and

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by Altan Qan to the Ming emperor with the horse tribute. It is not described here in detail because it is not a religious painting: see Pozdneev 1895: 367-81; Chavannes 1896; Charleux 2006: 48-9.

[69] The status and political role of the *qatun* in Mongolia has been studied by Ratchnevsky 1976; Rossabi 1979 (Yuan dynasty); Lambton 1988: 272-96 (Ilkhans); Serruys 1975 (Jönggen Qatun and Maciγ Qatun).

wealthy. Their influence, it is true, was 'personal and not institutionalized.'[70] Nevertheless, their intervention in public affairs was often effective. A few 'remarkable women' of the imperial family, especially widows, played a decisive role in Mongol politics: they arranged marriages, promoted their sons' careers, participated in major decision-making, or even ruled the imperial or royal domain as Regent (such as Töregene Qatun, Ögedei's widow, r. 1241-1246; and, later, Jönggen Qatun). Their representation on the throne could be the recognition of real political influence as well as a mere appearance with the *qan*.[71] A description of the enthronement ceremony of Güyük in 1246 even describes the *qan* enthroned together with his *qatun*. It must be noted that although the majority of Mongol rulers were polygamous, only one spouse is usually depicted: the first wife had the precedence in official banquets where she sat on the throne with her husband (Ratchnevsky 1976: 516). Only the Arjai Cave 28 and the Houdesheng tomb paintings show the *qan* with several wives.

The second possible interpretation is that a double, diarchic principle, male and female, is inherent to the representation of power in the Mongolian world, as it is in the supernatural world (see the binary figures of deities, such as the two complementary ancestors Bulagat and Ehirit of the Buryats, or the Gods of the left and right wings in the old pantheon: Hamayon 1990: 202, 615-22). Caroline Humphrey suggested during the conference that the presence of the woman enhanced the prestige of the man and was a symbol of his sexual power, of his capacity to perpetuate the lineage: a sovereign, and above all an ancestor, must have descendants as numerous as possible. The disappearance of portraits of couples after Mongolia was incorporated within the Sino-Manchu Empire would therefore reflect a loss of Mongolian independence as well as the princes' taste for Sino-Manchu representations of power.

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[70] Lambton 1988: 290, discussing women of the imperial Ilkhanid household.

[71] In Simon de Saint-Quentin's description, the *qatun* sits down on the felt blanket beside the *qan*, then both are lifted high off the ground and proclaimed Emperor and Empress (Sela 2005: 28-9).

From the Three-Quarters View to the Frontal View

In portraits of the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, the ruling couple is depicted in a slight three-quarters view, looking at each other (see this in the Yuan period official portraits and tomb murals depicted in fig. 15-18). They often adopt a relaxed position, asymmetric and nonchalant, conveying familiarity and humanity. Their hands rest on their knees, or one arm rests on the armchair; legs are open, or one of the legs is slightly folded (fig. 15), a posture close to the 'royal ease posture' from Buddhist paintings of kings, princes and bodhisattvas, [72] and reminiscent of the Chinese portrait tradition.[73] They generally sit on an easily transportable folding chair (*jiaoyi*) – a symbol of prestige and power in Chinese society also praised by the Mongol nomadic elite.

This relaxed posture strongly contrasts with the rigid iconic posture and frontal view of post-Yuan portraits. The frontal view certainly comes in part from the influence of Buddhist painting, appearing along with a profusion of Buddhist attributes and objects (halos, ritual scarves, jewels, eight auspicious symbols, wish-granting jewels...). But the frontal hieratic posture also characterizes the portrayal of former Inner Asian nomad kings (especially the Turks and Uyghurs) and Central Asian monarchs such as the Ottomans: to maintain the equilibrium of the world the king faces directly forward, flanked by symmetrically arranged figures, not turning to any side (Esin 1970: 107, 114). This pose was also commonly adopted by Chinese ancestor portraits from the fifteenth century onwards (Stuart and Rawski 2001: 84-6). Frontality creates a centre of attraction and captures attention; Schapiro (2005) has shown that the dichotomy between frontality and profile conveys two

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[72] See the tomb occupant enjoying music painted on the eastern wall of the Fujiatun tomb (Lingyuan district, Liaoning province: Liaoning sheng bowuguan and Lingyuan xian wenhua guan 1985), as well as the wood-block printed illustrations of the illustrated encyclopaedia *Shilin guangji* by Chen Yuanjing [1330-1333] 1963, vol. 2, 'Yili lei' 儀禮類 (see a reproduction in Steinhardt 1990-1991: 213).

[73] We know that traditions from the Mongolian court of China may have made their way to Central Asia through book-printing.

complementary forms of discourse. As in Buddhist icons or in later Chinese ancestor portraits, the frontal posture shows that the main characters are worshipped as Buddhas (especially when they have a halo: fig. 14) and/or as ancestors. Power then seems to be more impersonal and strict. Such figures generally sit cross-legged (*jabilaju saγuqu*) on a throne (fig. 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 19); in Buddhist Mongolia, the cross-legged posture was the most honorific, adopted by lamas, and persons of a high status invited in a yurt (Hamayon 1970: 136).

Secondary figures in such depictions are smaller, following the principle of 'hieratic scale' in Buddhist art. Such sons, courtiers, servants, and/or worshippers are disposed symmetrically beside and in front of the enthroned royal couple. They sit cross-legged, or adopt a posture of humility expressing deference or subordination, in a three-quarters view: standing (fig. 14), or kneeling and resting on both knees (*sökürejü saγuqu*: fig. 9, 19) to offer a gift or a cup, or in *comcujiju saγuqu* (a knee down, the hind-quarters resting on the heel of the horizontal leg: the second wives at Arjai, fig. 10).[74] Joining their hands in the worshipping gesture (*añjali mudrā,* fig. 7, 8A), they present a cup (fig. 14, 7, 9) or a jewel (fig. 7, 9, 19) to the monarch, hold Buddhist symbols (rosaries, *cintāmani* [wish-granting jewel] at Mayidari-yin Juu fig. 7, 8A), or play music (fig. 7, 19).

The Old Symbols of Royal Power

The standard, one of the main symbols of power in the Mongolian world believed to embody the soul of a chief warrior, is seen in one of Abatai Qan's paintings in Erdeni Juu[75] and in the painting of Chinggis Khan and Qutuγtai Secen Qong tayiji (see bottom left, where four standards surround a fifth one, fig. 13). In the paintings of Erdeni Juu and Ejen Qoriya (fig. 9, 14), attendants who hold a quiver with arrows, a bow, a horse (also in Altan Qan's letter), or a jug are reminiscent of the weapon bearer ('companion of the quiver'), the equerry leading the unmounted saddled horse, and the jug-bearer attending the wise king of

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[74] This posture is a 'sign of attention towards the elders and of being at their disposal' (Hamayon 1970: 136).

[75] Reproduced in Müller and Pleiger (eds) 2005: cat. 413.

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ancient Turkic compositions.[76] Bows, arrows and quivers were symbols of royal power in the Turkic world (Barthold 1970: 202, 216-17, 223). Because they include motifs that are characteristic of ancient Turkic representations of power, these three paintings seem to be representative of an ancient style. These ancient symbols are mixed with Buddhist symbols in Buddhist or thangka-like paintings.

But in contrast to Inner Asian traditions, in the majority of the Mongol portraits the *qan* carries no weapons[77] and is shown enthroned, peacefully ruling his empire. Unlike the Turkic stone men, the Mongol stone figures are unarmed. And the Mongols of East Asia chose not to represent their monarch on horseback, in contrast to the investiture ride or the formal hunt of the Turkic king, a theme that was taken over by the Ilkhanid rulers, as can be seen in book-paintings from the Ilkhanid period (Esin 1970: 109).

The Cup, a Symbol of Royal Rite and Funeral Sacrifice

The Mongol sovereign often holds a cup, a bowl or a glass at breast level (fig. 1, 9), raises the cup to drink it (while the *qatun* drinks her own: fig. 14), or offers it to his *qatun* (fig. 15). The cup seems to be the most characteristic non-Buddhist attribute. It is linked with the fact that the deceased couple is ritually fed.

The cup that appears with the stone men belongs to a funerary context and is obviously a heritage of the Turk period. Corpses were also found with a cup near their hand in tombs.[78]

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[76] Esin 1970: 101, 107-9. See, for instance, the panel of stucco relief found at Rayy preserved at the Pennsylvannia Museum of Art (Esin 1970: 103-4 and fig. 19). Servants also carry bows, quiver and arrows on Dunhuang scrolls: 'Mandala of Guanyin,' 10th century, EO 3579, Fond Pelliot, Guimet Museum, Paris.

[77] Except for the portrait of Qabutu Qasar, the statue of Chinggis Khan mentioned in the *Erdeni-yin tobci* and the Badyar Coyiling Süme's thangka of Chinggis Khan, that show the *qan* carrying a bow and a quiver with arrows in their back.

[78] In the first tomb of Yangqunmiao, near the right arm of the deceased was found a cup of pure gold and silver, enveloped in a piece of silk. For Oguz Turks buried with a cup in their hand: Boyle 1965: 149; Esin 1969: 243.

The stone men's cup is thought to contain (symbolically or materially) alcohol, water, and perhaps offerings of fat, or burnt meat (or, according to some archaeologists, tobacco, the soul of the dead, or his ashes). It has sometimes been explained as an allusion to the funerary banquet given to the deceased: in any case, the ritual function is very likely.[79]

Alcohol is a fundamental element of Mongol rituals. Liquid offerings of milk products by libation (offered in cups) and sprinklings (*saculi*), are offered to feed the spirits, gods, and ancestors and therefore honour them by giving their share of the first milk (Serruys 1974; Ge 1999: 336). Sprinklings made towards Sky and the four cardinal points were performed at the early Mongol and Yuan court (cf. note 11) and remain a daily gesture of rural Mongols. At the end of each sacrifice, the alcohol and meat offered to the ancestors are shared and consumed by the participants. In the sacrifice to Chinggis Khan at Ejen Qoriya, for instance, 'only when meat and drink are consumed by the participants the sacrifice [to Chinggis Khan] can be considered accomplished. Receiving a share of meat and drink after a sacrifice means to the participants that they are securing the blessing of the ancestors or of the divinity in whose honor the sacrifice was performed' (Chiodo 1992: 111).

The cup in the hands of a monarch in regalia also evokes the 'cup-rite' performed in various rituals in the Inner Asian world since the beginning of the first millenium: enthronement ceremonies, investiture of a vassal (oath of allegiance), and the rites of *and* (Mong. *anda*, sworn brotherhood of unrelated men in an equal relationship) and wedding. The 'communion' (drinking the same beverage at the same time) seals a contract between two parties (alliance, marriage), or between a king and his subjects.[80] Drinking was, in fact, central to any formal and ritual occasion, and Mongol kings and queens used to drink together.[81]

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[79] Cf. Ge 1999: 333 quoting sources on funerary customs of the Turks and summarizing previous studies.

[80] Esin (1969) studied the origins of the cup-rites and its meaning in Xiongnu, Turkic, Uyghur, Ilkhanid, Ottoman and Timurid art and culture; Bleichsteiner (1951-1952: 192 *sq.*) discusses drinking ceremonies in the Mongolian world. See the description of an

In Mongol paintings, cups are also raised by courtiers paying homage to the monarch (fig. 7, 9, 14). The gesture of offering a cup and the kneeling posture meant servitude, acceptance of vassalage, and worship (as in the Mayidari-yin Juu painting, fig. 7). Cups were also presented to the Buddha about to be enthroned by the Kings of the Four Directions in Uyghur paintings (Esin 1969: 225).

As in the ancient Turkic world, the offering to the monarch of milk products in a cup (along with sacrificial meat) reflects the libation to the deities and ancestors offered by the devotee. Funerary and worshipping rites (as well as wedding rites, which are also a metaphor of the government)[82] paralleled the cup-rite of royal ceremonies; these distinct ceremonies visually converge in commemorative paintings (fig. 7, 9, 14), where enthroned kings and queens are worshipped as ancestors.

But with the sixteenth century Buddhist renaissance, the cup, at least in the hands of *qan* or *qatun*, is often replaced by a Buddhist attribute such as a *qataγ*, a rosary or a wish-granting jewel for Abatai Qan at Erdeni Juu (fig. 9), an *amṛita* vase (vase for lustral water) and a wish-granting jewel for Jönggen qatun (fig. 8B).

Conclusion

As in medieval Europe, the Mongol portrait developed from funerary statues to a political and religious symbol linking the past sovereign to the present ruler. Political ideology and ancestor worship were closely interwoven. During the earliest period, sculpted portraits serving as supports for the soul, used to

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enthronement ritual in Esin 1970: 102-3). During the enthronement ceremony of a Mongol *qan*, the *qan* was led to the throne by members of his family; the participants removed their hats, slung their belt across their backs, knelt three times to the sun, distributed gifts and passed the wine goblet (see Sela 2005: 25-9).

[81] *Secret History of the Mongols* §156 (trans. Even and Pop 1994: 116).

[82] The men sit on the right and the women on the left, homage expressed by kneeling down before the senior and improvising a song while offering the cup. See the chapter by Rodica Pop in Volume 2 of *Representing Power*.

feed and revere the ancestors, were worshipped in tents and temples. In this paper, we have underlined the major distinction between ancestors' statues that can be assimilated to ongons because they are directly fed, and two-dimensional 'inhabited portraits.' Under the Buddhist influence of Qubilai's reign, woven portraits of past rulers were hung in ancestors' temples along with mandalas, and painted and woven images of the rulers became increasingly common. After the sixteenth century Buddhist renaissance, statues were reserved for Buddhas, holy lamas and for the divinized Chinggis Khan, while the representation of dead and living rulers was expressed through other media such as murals or thangka-like paintings.

In Mongol representations of *qan* and *qatun*, the belief in the deceased protector ancestors, and in the importance of family and lineage, sometimes converged with Chinese style ancestor worship and Buddhist ideas of a *cakravartin* ruler. Chinggis Khan was worshipped first as an ancestor, then as a deity, and later forcibly integrated into the Buddhist pantheon. Other Mongol rulers were simultaneously represented as donor, and as *cakravartin* ruler or bodhisattva (fig. 8B). The various politico-religious aims of the rulers' portraits – commemoration, veneration of a divinized ancestor, legitimization of a living ruler through his ancestors' portraits, and exaltation of the devotion of Buddhist donors – were therefore often interwoven. Portraits made for ancestors' worship can be privately venerated in a restricted place by a few descendants and effigies used by the deceased in the otherworld kept in a closed tomb. But portraits made for legitimization through glorification of a past ruler, or for exhibition of the devotion, wealth, and merits of Buddhist donors, lose their point if hidden away. The statue of Chinggis Khan in front of which even the foreigners had to bow and the woven or painted portraits exposed within Buddhist monasteries during the Yuan and Northern Yuan dynasties were relatively public objects, which served to expose the *qan*'s power, dominion and privilege to the eyes of visitors.[83] In a similar way,

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[83] Even to foreign visitors: the Ming scholar Shen Defu (1997 [1606]: 680) describes a portrait he himself saw of Jönggen Qatun telling her

the luxurious illustrated manuscripts of the Ilkhanids, such as the *Jami 'al-tavarikh*, publicly exalted the Mongols and their history (Hillenbrand 2002).

Finally, we see a competition between the ancient Inner Asian heritage of frontal representation and cup-rites as opposed to three-quarters and relaxed postures as well as Buddhist attributes. But in any case, the Mongols chose a pacific representation of the sovereign, with his main wife and often his entire family. These portraits thus also give us much information on self-representation, costume, gender status, ancestor worship, and conventions, reflecting the highly personalized nature of politics for Mongols.

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rosary; he may have seen one of the Mayidari-yin Juu's portraits of the *qatun*.

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Figures

1. Stone marble statue, 13th century, Sühbaatar province, Dariganga sum. Tsultem 1989: n°56.
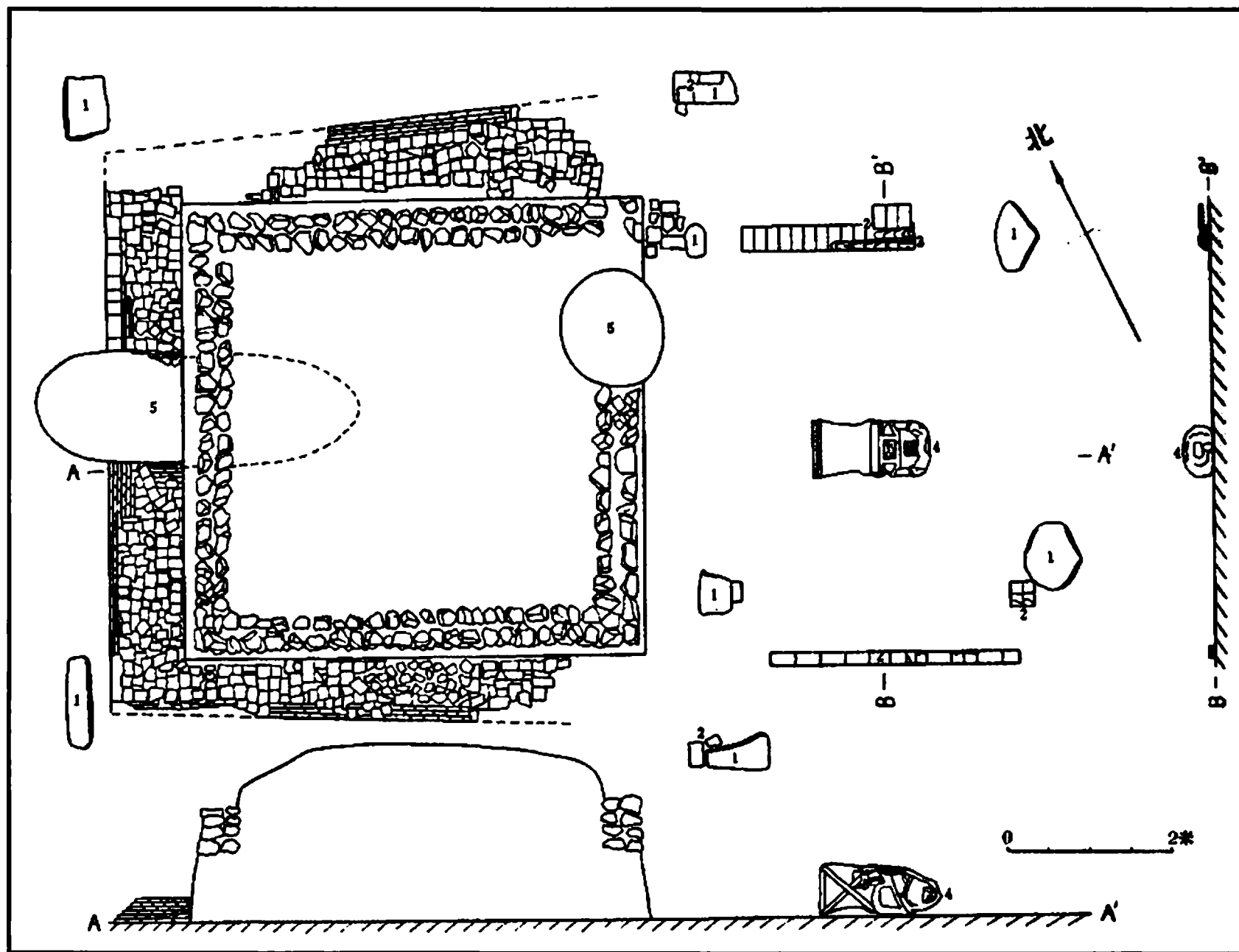
2. Yangqunmiao, sacrificial platform, n°2.
From Nei Menggu wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo and Zhenglan qi wenwu guanlisuo (eds) 1994: 614, fig. 5.
1. Stone platform;
2. bricks;
3. timber;
4. stone statue;
5. pit.

3. Three ongons, bronze (5cm, 4,8cm and 4,3cm) from the time of the Mongol Empire. Excavated in Tongliao Municipality, Inner Mongolia (Nei Menggu bowuyuan and Zhonghua shijitan yishuguan [eds] 2004: 310-11).

6A. Detail of the Mandala of Vajrabhairava:
two emperors, Tuɣ Temür and his elder brother
Qosila, on the lower left of the thangka…

6B. … and their respective consorts
Budasiri and Babuša on the lower right.

7. Mural painting representing Buddhist lay donors and monks of Altan Qan's family, main temple of Mayidari-yin Juu, lower part of the western wall of the back shrine, H. 2m, L. 16m long, 17th century (drawing by Wang Leiyi, *in* Jin 1980: 176).

8A. Cürüke (Altan Qan's grandson and Jönggen Qatun third husband). Detail of the right part of the donors' painting (see Fig. 7). © Jin Shen

8B. Jönggen Qatun. Detail of the right part of the donors' painting (see Fig. 7). © Jean-Claude Poncin

9. One of the three paintings representing Abatai Qan and his family. Copy by Dendev of a mural painting (not preserved) of Erdeni Juu, H. 150cm, L. 100cm. Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, Ulaanbaatar

10. Drawing of the painting of donors, detail, south wall, lower register (120x50cm), right to the entrance, cave n°28 at Arjai (Otoγ banner, Ordos).
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11. Painting of donors, south wall, lower register, left to the entrance, cave n°31 at Arjai (Otoγ banner, Ordos). Batu Jirigala and Yang Haiying 2005: 147.

12. Abatai Qan, cloth thangka, unknown painter,
62x86cm, Qing dynasty. Central Museum,
Ulaanbaatar (Tsultem 1986: fig. 152).
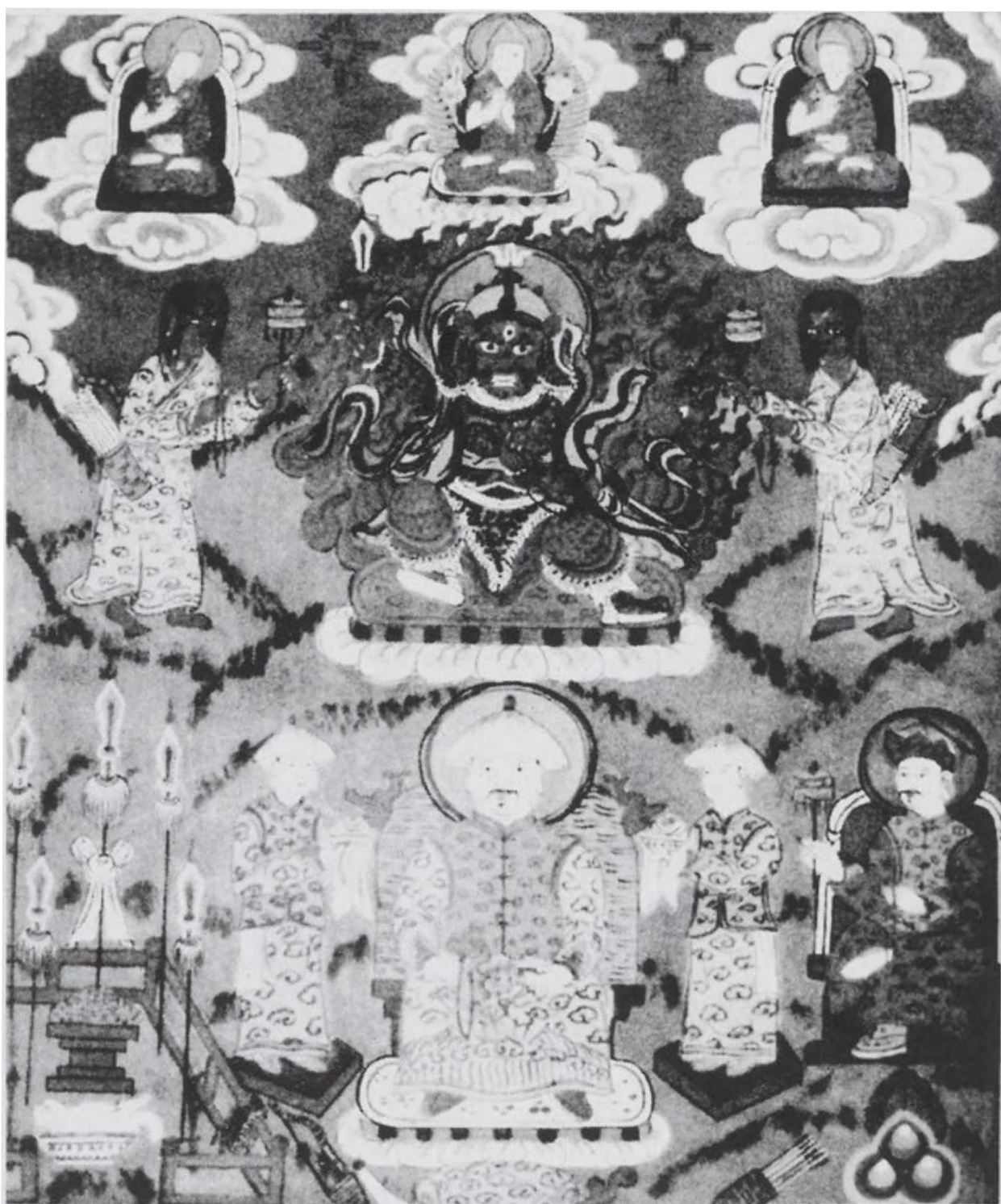
13. Thangka worshipped at Sasa (ancient Yeke ongγon caidam, Ch. Dafentan 大墳灘), Üüsin banner. It represents Chinggis Khan as a *dharmapāla*. Below are Qutuγtai Secen Qong tayiji and Saγang Secen. Qing dynasty. Qasbiligtü C. and Qasbaγan-a 1987: facing p. 180.

14. Sacrificial image, representing Chinggis Khan, his main consort and his sons. Copy of a 'Yuan dynasty painting' preserved in the 'mausoleum of Chinggis Khan,' Ejen Qoriya banner, Ordos (probably Qing dynasty). Drawing from Heissig 1973 [1970]: 421, fig. 11 (from Dylykov, S. D., *Edzen-choro*, Moscow: Filologija i istorija mongol'skich narodov, 1959; see a reproduction in Solongγod 1999: fig. 13). The cup of the *qatun* has been omitted in the drawing but is present on the painting.

15. Enthronment scene depicting the ruler and his consort surrounded by members of the court, detail, *Jami 'al-tavarikh* by Rashīd ad-Dīn, illustration from the Diez Albums, ink, colors and gold on paper, Iran (possibly Tabriz), early 14th century. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung (Diez A fol. 70, S. 10).

16. Tolui and his court, *Jami 'al-tavarikh*, by Rashīd ad-Dīn, 14th century. Ms Sup persan 1113, folio 164v, Bnf, Paris.
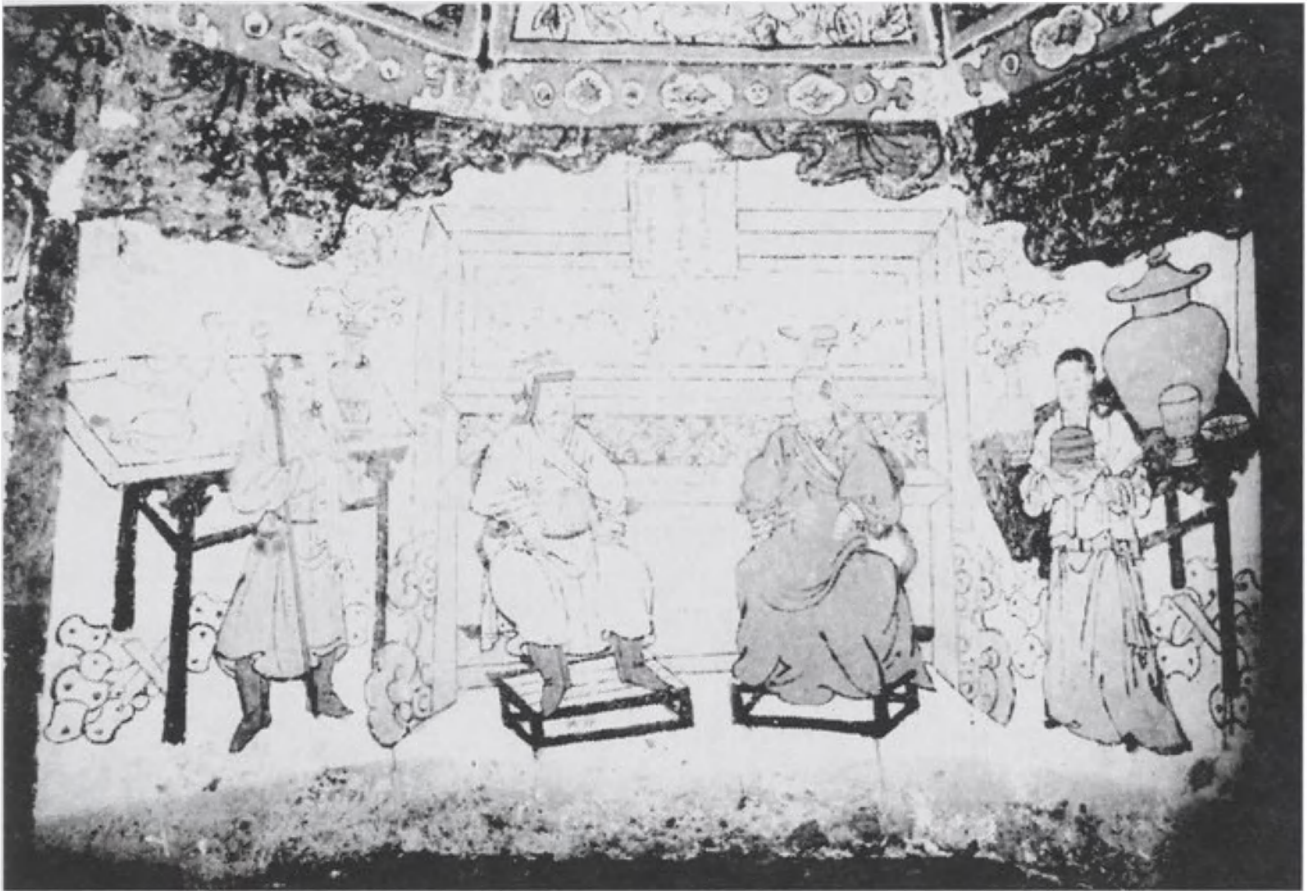
17. Portrait of a tomb couple, Pucheng tomb, north wall, Donger village, Pucheng district, Shaanxi province, northeast of Xi'an, 1269 (Liu 2000; Shaanxi sheng kaogu yanjiusuo 2000)

18. Portrait of a tomb couple, detail, Yuanbaoshan tomb, north wall (width 2,43m, height 0,94m), Chifeng municipality. From Xiang 1983, color pl. 1.
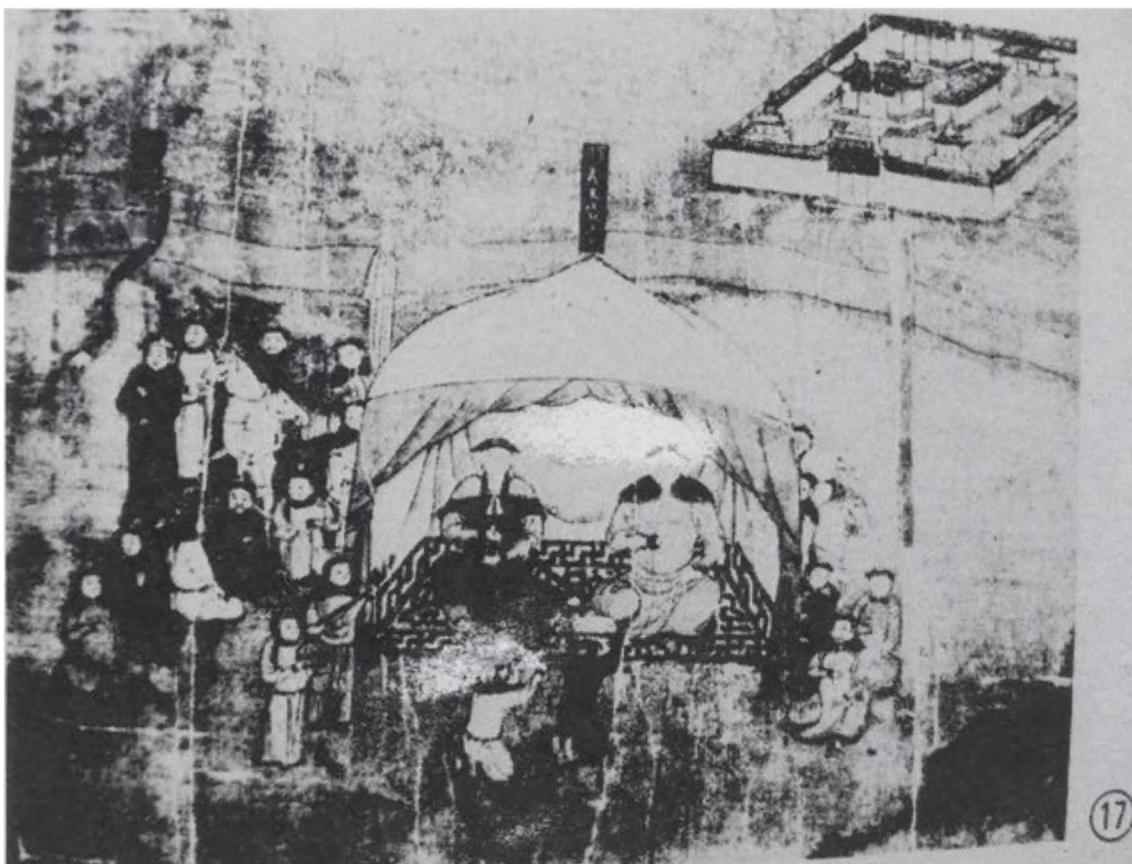
19A. Altan Qan and his wife, drawing of the painting which accompanied a letter written on a horizontal scroll, dated August 17, 1580, add: : ed to the Ming emperor. Institute of Eastern studies, attached to the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (Pozdneev, 1895).

19B. Picture based on above in Pozdneev, 1895.
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Chapter 7

Nurhaci's Names

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Nurhaci, the celebrated founding father of the Qing dynasty, is a figure whose historical dimension is both multifaceted and stratified. The historical sources themselves, many of which have been the object of imperial revision and censorship, together with historians' interpretations of the rise of the Manchus, account for the multiple routes of approach to Nurhaci's biography and record.

The Qing-centered view, based on works such as the *Huang Qing kaiguo fanglüe*, provides a linear narrative that focuses on the protagonists of the rise of the Manchus and their exploits (Hauer 1926). The figure of Nurhaci, Qing Taizu, enjoys pride of place, as his rise to greater and greater power is presented in a manner consistent with an idea of logical progression from tributary status to independence and then to conquest. This view is painted with layers of revisions, censorship, and reorganization that the sources underwent after the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1636, down to the Qianlong period in the second half of the eighteenth century.

A second historiographic strain, perhaps best represented in Western scholarship by Frederick Wakeman's *Great Enterprise*, draws substantially from late Ming sources and from the writings of Ming loyalists and intellectuals (Wakeman 1985). This is a narrative focused on the Ming side, which, by exposing the Ming court's divisions, factions, and incompetence, largely attributes the loss of China to the Ming government's inefficiency and inability to respond to the crises that beset the country in the 1630s and 1640s. From this perspective the Manchu conquest appears as an act of opportunism, linked to the perennial problem of Chinese dynastic history that holds the weakness of the south responsible for allowing northern barbarians to enter and conquer China. Nurhaci's role, then, is

confined to that of the borderland strongman, or, in Franz Michael's words, of 'feudal lord,' who was successful in unifying the Manchurian tribes with various means including cunning, violence, and deceit, but was not ultimately responsible for the Manchu conquest (Michael [1942] 1965: 41).

A third strain concerns the recovery and analysis of pre-Qing Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese sources.[1] For its own nature, this work has focused on the critical appraisal of information gleaned from later Chinese-language or bilingual sources on the basis of pre-conquest materials such as the *Jiu Manzhou Dang* (*Chiu Man-chou Tang*, 'Old Manchu Archives' hereafter *CMCT*).[2] This type of work and orientation has yet to produce a general narrative of the Manchu conquest, but has been most effective in clarifying aspects of institutional history (the Banners, the army, the bureaucracy) and political relationships (such as those between Manchus and Mongols, or Manchus and Koreans).[3] Mostly, this line of work has served to demystify standard narratives derived from the later Qing sources, and to reveal interpolations and anachronisms, more than to forge a new theory of the Manchu conquest. It has also added an important layer of facts not reported in the Chinese sources, such as the description of the early 'khanate' of Nurhaci in the territory of the Jianzhou Jurchen.[4]

Moreover, a cursory examination of 1980s historiography from the People's Republic of China shows that the figure of Nurhaci and his role in history have gone through a major shift in the last two decades of the twentieth century.[5] Rigid categories that tended to brand historical figures with

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[1] See, for instance, the pre-Qing sources published in Stary (ed.) 1996.

[2] There is a vast literature on the early Manchu historical sources. See the classic work by Kanda 1980: 71-94. For an extensive survey see Crossley and Rawski 1993: 63-102.

[3] On Manchu institutional history during Nurhaci's reign, see Linke 1982.

[4] Among the most influential sources, we ought to mention the report of the Korean envoy Sin Ch'ung-il. On this see Stary 1984: 323-59.

[5] An early article that marked a shift in the appreciation of Nurhaci as a historical figure was Yan Chongnian 1977: 61-70. In some articles Nurhaci was even described as a 'Manchu hero': see Li Hongbin 1980.

shallow interpretations based on 'class origin' and social status gradually changed to allow a greater sophistication of analysis. A series of important articles on his military and political thought, social reforms, as well as his genealogy and education have since been produced, together with several monograph-length biographies (Yan 1983; Teng 1985; Yehenala 1997; Gu 2000). However, the meaning of Nurhaci's various Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese titles, and the way in which they could be placed in relation to his political rise are not topics that have received much attention.

This particular angle seems especially significant in light of recent research on Qing ideology and rulership. From the pathbreaking study by David Farquhar onwards, we now appreciate much more clearly the fact that Manchu imperial power – institutional, political, and symbolic – was based on a composite structure of ritual, religious, and ideological elements converging into a complex representation of imperial power, in which various strains can be identified: Chinese, Buddhist, Mongolian, Manchurian, and perhaps generically 'Inner Asian.'[6] If we accept this as a distinctive and unique mark of Qing rulership, we need to ask when these different facets began to take shape.

In general, it is with the Qianlong emperor that scholars see the full blooming of consciously expressed multiple forms of rulerships, yet it is clear that his less flamboyant predecessors too, and in particular the Kangxi and Yongzheng emperors, sought to represent their authority in multiple ways and according to discrete idioms of power (Crossley 1992). If the Qianlong reign attains the most elaborate forms of prismatic and multifaceted rulership, it is legitimate to wonder whether this feature of Manchu rule resulted from a process begun with the conquest of China, or rather represents the end point of an evolutionary progression that has its roots in the very origins of the formation of Manchu power. In other words, can we find, at the time of the rise of Nurhaci, traces of a political agency that

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[6] Farquhar 1978: 5-34. On the 'multicultural' representation of the Qing court and imperial power, see the collection of studies in Millward *et al.* 2004.

may reveal, albeit in rudimentary and embryonic form, elements of the distinctive idiom of power that we see in its mature form in the high Qing period?

Pamela Crossley in her book *The Manchus* presents an interesting argument that, for the first time in the English language, evaluates the significance of Nurhaci (in her spelling, Nurgaci) as a historical figure (Crossley 1997: 47-74). She sees him as an 'enigma' defined by three myths: that of the 'Avenger,' that of 'Individual Supremacy,' and that of the 'Great Enterprise.' To sum up her argument, the myth of the 'avenger' refers to the famous 'Grievance' according to which one of the key motives behind Nurhaci's will to wage war against the Ming was his desire to avenge the deaths of his father and grandfather, responsibility for which was attributed to the Ming. The myth of individual supremacy refers to the notion, in standard narratives, that Nurhaci was from the beginning the uncontested leader of the Manchus. According to Crossley, political responsibilities continued to be collegial and shared with his immediate family members. The third myth, that of the Great Enterprise, refers to Nurhaci's intention to conquer China, which Crossley rejects by arguing that the maximum extent of Nurhaci's political ambition was to create a regional kingdom in Manchuria and Liaodong. While I must admit reservations as to whether Nurhaci as a historical figure can be characterized in such a manner, I believe Crossley is correct in identifying different strains to his historical persona, and to point to later constructions emerging from Qing historical narratives. Aspects of Nurhaci's feats are consciously promoted to present a teleological view according to which his actions led to the glorious outcome celebrated by later Manchu emperors, descendants of Nurhaci himself. Yet this perhaps mythical, perhaps simply 'doctored,' historical narrative does not completely replace (or erase) the actual process through which Nurhaci fashioned his state and progressed on the path towards greater political power. It is within this process that the symbolic representations of power need to be recognized, especially relying upon contemporary sources.

There is no question that the hagiographic picture painted in later sources is fashioned in a way to honor and revere a political as well as familial ancestor. But denying that picture

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and critiquing its sources should not obfuscate the fact that political power was present and represented in Nurhaci's own time. Moving, therefore, beyond the assessment and recognition of the historical myths associated with Nurhaci, it is necessary to define how they came to be constructed, that is, on what, if any, historical reality they were based. Historians have often moved into the territory of early Manchu history walking backwards, without truly turning away from the images coming to us from the later Qing period. If, on the other hand, we attempt to read Nurhaci's role in history in a manner coherent within his own age, and based preeminently on contemporary sources, the issue of later manipulations can be contained and isolated.

To begin, we may question in what ways Nurhaci began to build his power. Was he just another ambitious aristocrat? Did he ever dream of establishing a dynasty? Was he driven only by a generic enthusiasm for military action and war? Any of these questions poses the problem of how he stated, represented, exhibited, or broadcast his real power and his ambitions to greater power. From these questions stems my intention to examine the 'names' and titles attributed to Nurhaci in contemporary sources, and see whether we can find telltale signs that identify for us at least the type of leader that he was, the power he wielded, and how this was constructed and represented over time.

Early references to Nurhaci report his proper name only in Korean and Chinese sources, while in Manchu he is referred to as an aristocrat, a *beile* ('prince') carrying the personal title of *sure beile*, meaning 'wise prince.' This is a title of nobility, but not especially meaningful in political terms or unique. His younger brother Šurhaci was addressed as *baturu beile (heroic prince)*, which surely was not a lesser title. The term *beile* in itself simply indicates that the holder belonged to the nobility, probably with political authority over a certain territory and people. The extent of that authority cannot be understood, however, by looking at the title alone. In fact, one of the difficulties presented by the study of early Manchu history consists of matching the various titles attached to the names of Mongol and Manchu leaders with the actual extent of their political and military power.

In the Korean and Chinese sources of this early period, that is from the 1580s to 1606, Nurhaci is not referred to by any significant title. Sin Ch'ungil, the Korean envoy who visited Nurhaci's court in 1596, refers to him occasionally by his full name, Nuerhachi 奴兒哈赤, which in Korean pronunciation is rendered as Noahapchok (Stary 1984: 347). More often, however, in his report we find less appealing names, such as the first syllable *nu* 奴, which is always rendered with the Chinese character for 'slave,' and the character *qiu* 酋 to form the Korean reading Noch'u. The character *qiu*, which means 'tribal chieftain,' is sometimes replaced by the less appealing *zei* 賊 (bandit). Whether *qiu* was even understood as an actual title is unclear, but renderings such as Nu *qiu*, which could be read as 'slave chieftain,' or Nu *zei*, 'slave bandit,' must have appeared to contemporary readers as singularly unflattering. The same form of the character *nu* followed by *qiu* appears also in the report by the Korean war prisoner Yi Minhwan, *Chaekchong Illok* (柵中日綠 *Zhazhong Rilu*), which was written around 1620.[7] We may therefore conclude that Koreans referred most often to Nurhaci in internal reports by his personal name in some abbreviated form.

In Chinese sources of the Wanli period such as the biography of Nurhaci reported in the *Chou Liao Shuohua* (籌遼碩畫), he is referred to as the 'Eastern Barbarian Nurhaci,' 'Dongyi Nuerhachi' (東夷奴兒哈赤) (Heuschert 1996: 53-6; Miranda 1996). Does, then, the lowly manner of appellation that we find among Koreans and Chinese in this period reflect any notion of political power, or lack of it?

If we look beyond the name at the reports themselves, we see that the Korean envoys indicated that Nurhaci's power was not that of an average, run-of-the-mill Jurchen aristocrat. In 1596 his domain was distinguished by its extensive military and economic organization and impressive architecture. His authority appeared far-reaching. His political status, again from the descriptions gleaned from Korean and Chinese sources, was

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[7] In his translation of the *Chaekchong Illok*, Erling von Mende translates Nu *qiu* as 'Häuptling Nurhaci.' See von Mende 1996: 111-55.

higher than that of other Jurchen leaders, and, within Nurhaci's clan, higher than that of most, if not all, of his family members.

Some light on the reality of the extent of his political power can be shed by the titles granted him as special honors by the Ming emperor. In 1589 he received the title of *dudu qianshi* (都督僉事), that is, Assistant General-in-Chief, and in 1595 the top rank of Tiger and Dragon General, *hulong jiangjun* 虎龍將軍. Both ranks were specific to the frontier, and represented a political contract between the Ming court and the recipient that bespoke of an exclusive and trusting relationship, granted privileges within the tribute system, and ensured political and even military support in the region. His rise on the ladder of the Ming system of frontier diplomacy provided Nurhaci with real political and diplomatic power, not just symbolic currency.

Nurhaci used Ming support chiefly for two purposes. First, to render himself immune to accusations of prevarication and violence as he attacked and subjugated fellow Jurchens. Acting with the endorsement of the authority conferred by the Ming titles enabled him to justify such operations as aiming to maintain order in the region. Second, he sought to monopolize, through his higher status, the licenses that allowed access to the immensely profitable border trade. The role of Nurhaci as a 'commercial hero' as well as a military hero is indeed still celebrated in Manchu folklore, especially in relation to the ginseng trade.[8] Hence, we might say that at the turn of the century Nurhaci's real power was possibly reflected more accurately by the ranks he acquired outside his own political milieu. On the other hand, these titles remained to a large degree purely ceremonial and did not translate into any visible rise in status either within Jurchen political society, where Nurhaci remained a *beile*, or in the references found in the Chinese and Korean sources. In fact, by this time Nurhaci had not revealed his ambitions by seeking especially grandiose titles, and it is possible that his power within Jianzhou Jurchen society was constrained by a system of communal or at least consultative

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[8] See, for instance, Flitsch 1999: 353-75. On Nurhaci's commercial ventures, see Teng Yao 2002: 37-44.

leadership in which his family members and other aristocrats held a level of authority that had to be formally preserved.

A shift with profound implications occurred in the twelfth month of the *fulgiyan morin* year (Ch. *bingwu* 丙午; December 1606-January 1607), when Nurhaci acquired the title of *kündülen qayan* from a delegation of Qalqa Mongol leaders.[9] In later Chinese sources, with a degree of obfuscation, this is rendered as *shenwu huangdi* 神武皇帝, or Holy Martial Emperor, but this translation does not properly reflect the Mongol term, which means 'revered,' or 'honored' emperor (khan).[10] Though this is the first time the term *qayan* (emperor) appears as part of Nurhaci's title, it soon came into general use in all Mongol-language correspondence and appears to have been adopted by all Mongols.

The acquisition of the term *qayan*, equivalent to the Manchu *han*, set Nurhaci, in regard to diplomacy and political relations with the Mongols, apart from and above other Jurchen leaders, including his family members. In this sense, it is politically meaningful. Arguably it was Nurhaci's investiture with a high Mongol title that entitled his son and successor, Hong Taiji, to retain the Mongol title of khan, as he was known among Mongols as *secen qayan* ('wise khan,' *sure han* in Manchu). In other words, the title given by the Mongols to Nurhaci at this relatively early stage of his 'career' helped insure that his family continued to hold a high hereditary rank among the Mongols. The long-term consequence of this event was that in the eyes of many Mongol leaders Nurhaci could be placed on an equal standing with Mongol rulers such as Ligdan Khan, who was hostile to the Manchus and nurtured the political project of unifying all Mongols. Even more importantly for Nurhaci's immediate political goals, the Mongol title of *qayan* could be used to secure a place of honor among the Mongols through select marriages with the most powerful families of the aristocracy. Moreover, oaths and alliances made with other

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[9] *Qing Taizu Wuhuangdi Shilu*, vol. 2, p. 28; *Manzhou shilu* 3.6a.

[10] *Daqing Taizu Gaohuangdi shilu* 3.9b. See also Hummel [1943] 1970: 598.

political leaders could be negotiated from a position of higher status.

At this point in time, in 1607, Nurhaci therefore appears to have gained Chinese and Mongol titles that were politically more meaningful, in the sense that they reflected more accurately the growth of his power. That is, Nurhaci's symbolic ratification of political power appeared first outside the Manchu linguistic milieu and outside the Jurchen body-politic.

The main Manchu-language source for this period, the *Jiu Manzhou Dang*, reports Nurhaci's Manchu titles in 1607 as *sure han* as well as *sure kŭndulen* (or *kundulen*) *han* (Mongol *kündülen qan*) (CMCT 1: 6, 8).[11] This is an important shift because it transfers the title *han*, superior to *beile*, from the Mongol into the Manchu context, while retaining the Mongolian *kündülen* in the Manchu title.

In 1614 the Mongol-derived title *sure kŭndulen* appears together with a new title, *genggiyen han* (enlightened emperor). The word *genggiyen* is a Manchu term first found in the context of a marriage between one of Nurhaci's son and a Mongol maiden of the Jarud (Jarayud) tribe; it was used as a sort of translation of the Mongol *kündülen* (MBRT 1: 40; CMCT 1: 87). The exact title here is *amba genggiyen han*, or 'great enlightened khan,' and it is repeated twice, both times in the context of marriage agreements. There is no immediate cause that I can see for the sudden appearance of this title. However, based on the time and circumstances, it may just be that Nurhaci chose to increase his own prestige and position in his diplomatic relations with the Mongols by using a genuine Manchu term preceded by *amba*, 'great.' After this date there is a certain volatility in Nurhaci's titles, whereby both *sure kundulen* and *genggiyen* continued to be in usage. On one occasion we also find *sure amba genggiyen han* rendered as *sure genggiyen han* in the *Manwen laodang* (CMCT 1: 129; MBRT 1: 56).

Only in 1617, when Nurhaci was 59 *sui* of age, did the term *genggiyen han* replace the now possibly obsolete *sure*

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[11] Note that the first occurrence of this title is also reported in the new-script version of the records, the *Tongki fuka sindaha hergen-i dangse* (*Manbun Rōtō*, MBRT) as *sure kundulen han* (MBRT 1: 1).

kundulen han (MBRT I: 76). A rare late recurrence (tenth month of 1619) of the term *kundulen* appears in the title *kundulen genggiyen han*, used in the context of Mongol-Manchu relations in a document treating the diplomatic agreements between Nurhaci and Qalqa nobles (MBRT I: 196-9). This retrospective use of the term *kundulen* may have been for political reasons, given that it was first granted to Nurhaci by a group of Qalqa aristocrats.

It is possible that the shift to *genggiyen* reflects the new political phase, which opened with the foundation of the Jin (or Latter Jin) dynasty in 1616. More important, however, seems to be the Manchu term *abkai fulingga*, or 'Mandate of Heaven' (Chinese *tianming* 天命), allegedly chosen by Nurhaci as his reign title in 1616, but which appears to have been used as an actual reign title only in 1625 (CMCT IV: 1953).

As Professor Bischoff remarked, no Chinese emperor would ever use such a title (Bischoff 1998: 59). And in fact, Nurhaci did not do so either. The retrospective use of the reign title was the product of a later re-writing of the sources. What is, then, the origin of this term? We need to go back to a title for Nurhaci that we find in the *Jiu Manzhou Dang*, that is, *abkai fulinggai banjiha genggiyen han*, 'the enlightened khan born by heavenly design' (CMCT I: 449; MBRT I: 161). As a personal title, this is quite extraordinary. No longer an indication of status and political power, it is a 'theoforic' title with large symbolic and ideological implications. The passage in which this title is reported is also significant for its date, the seventh month of the fourth year of rule of Nurhaci as head of the Jin dynasty, that is 1619. I have not been able to find in the *Jiu Manzhou Dang* or other source a title that includes the word *abkai fulingga* prior to this date.[12] The particular significance of this date, in my view, is that it occurs only a few months after the battle at Mt. Sarhū, in which Nurhaci, with numerically inferior forces, defeated the huge army sent by the Ming to 'smite' the rebellious barbarian. It seems to me that it should be possible to trace back to this particular and crucial event, the epochal defeat of the Ming at Mt.

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[12] Yan 1983: 158. See also Elliott 2005: 63, note 3.

Sarhū, a conceptual shift towards an ideological use of title and name symbolism.

Why do I think that the victory at Sarhū, not the founding of the Jin dynasty, should be identified as the turning point? A constant aspect of Nurhaci's propaganda, put forth to both Manchu and Mongol partners as well as to enemies, is that he presented his military victories as a demonstration that he had been favored by Heaven. Enemies and even potential allies are often plainly insulted for not understanding that Nurhaci wins because he is in the right, and therefore Heaven favors him (Kara 1970: 17-23, note 37). This way of reasoning and claiming the high moral ground after the fact is neither original to Nurhaci as an Inner Asian leader, nor really limited to Inner Asian politics. Victory itself might have been seen as the final proof that Heaven was in fact supporting Nurhaci, thus prompting the acquisition of a new title befitting the event. This would be a logical conclusion after the inflammatory anti-Ming declaration uttered on May 7, 1618. The seventh 'grievance' mentioned by Nurhaci as he was throwing the gauntlet to the Ming, expressed this theory eminently well:[13]

> I defeated the Hada tribe, which was granted to me by Heaven. The Chinese emperor intervened and forced me to free them, who were then attacked and defeated by the Yehe tribe. Under Heaven the men of every country fight, but those who have sinned against Heaven are defeated and perish, those favored by Heaven win and live. Is there a law that makes those killed in battle live again, or that returns the prisoners? The Emperor of a great state established by Heaven – [doesn't he then become] the supreme Lord of all countries? Why should I alone be placed outside this divine law? The Hulun tribe joined forces to attack me, and because they started the war, the Hulun sinned against Heaven, but Heaven favoured me. How can this Chinese [Ming] emperor oppose Heaven by supporting the Yehe people who are

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[13] On the Seven Grievances (in Manchu, *nadan amba koro*), see Meng Sen 1977: 62-76; Oshibuchi Hajime and Toda Shigeki 1934; Stary 1988: 43-55.d

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hated by Heaven, thus judging right what is wrong, and wrong what is right?

Nurhaci feels that he cannot be excluded from this divine law because he is an 'equal partner' in politics with the Chinese emperor. Yet the true hierarchy between supreme leaders was established by Heaven. Nurhaci needed a victory against the Ming to prove his point. This happened in 1619, which justified the acquisition of the 'theoforic' title of khan born 'By Heaven's Design,' to stress that he was indeed favored by Heaven more than the emperor of China himself. In propaganda terms, this is a brilliant turn that goes to show both the progression of Nurhaci's success, and the confirmation that Heaven had all but abandoned the Chinese emperor. At the same time, one cannot exclude a religious explanation, as Nurhaci may have also seen in his portentous victory a 'numinous' experience that justified, and to a certain extent called for, a sacral definition of his kingship.

The acquisition of a title by heavenly design should not, however, be confused with the later tradition that linked Nurhaci himself with the origin myth of the imperial house and the legend of the divine birth of the supposed progenitor of the Aisin Gioro clan Būkuri Yongšon, as this was a product of Manchu propaganda dating after Nurhaci's death (Matsumura 1977; Crossley 1985).

If there is any logic in the ways in which Nurhaci's titles changed, this seems to lay in a gradual accretion that is not entirely consistent with the way in which his political power grew. He was more than a *beile* when he was called *beile*, but less than a khan when he acquired that title. And only four years after he founded his new and independent Jin dynasty (*Aisin gurun*), if my hypothesis is correct, he put Heaven into his title.

I propose that we might see in this process the true model, albeit in rudimentary, or embryonic form, for the later polyvalent rulership which became one of the hallmarks of Qing imperial rule. In Nurhaci's titles' accumulation, and their semantic shifts, we can see already the formation of a concept of composite emperorship, which would later be enriched with the religious and ritual symbolism of the Buddhist and Confucian traditions.

The later historiography, especially the one carried out under imperial auspices, tried to erase the earlier phase, especially where titles that seemed to originate from outside the Manchu political contexts were concerned, as they would point to a less than linear progression and to an asymmetry between titles and political standing. Such an asymmetry was pointed out, in relation to the titles received from the Ming in the early period (and the reference is clearly to Nurhaci), by the Qianlong emperor in his preface to the 1786 edition of the *Kaiguo fanglüe*:[14]

> The Yuan, who originated in the northern desert, and the Taiqing, who originated in the shores of the Eastern Sea, have never been related to China. Although we did occasionally receive official titles from the Ming, these titles after all only served to restrain our name and bind us. Such titles of ministers were no better than [those of] village headman or temple priest.

In addition to making the political claim that the Qing were from the beginning quite separate from China, this statement may be revealing of at least one aspect of the evolution of the political representation of Nurhaci's power through the changing quality of his titles. Titles received from the Ming were not deemed to be important because the true legitimacy of the Qing came from the challenge expressed when Nurhaci consciously became the Enlightened Khan Born by Heavenly Design. The trajectory from tribal chieftain to khan was internal to the Mongol-Manchu political context, and quite in opposition to China.

The political meaning in the names, that which had helped Nurhaci secure a high status vis-à-vis Mongols and Chinese, was gradually overtaken by a different necessity, that of upping the political ante and invoking a higher status, that of a potential challenger to the Chinese throne. Whether Nurhaci *intended* to conquer the whole of China or just to carve out an independent kingdom for himself is beside the point, as his

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[14] *Huang Qing kaiguo fanglüe*, 'Yuzhi xu' (Imperial preface): 1a.

policy had been one of gradual extension of his power according to what the circumstances allowed, but always in the direction of expanding his political sphere of action—by claiming full independence—as well as his territorial authority and military strength.

By confronting the historical process that generated this shift, we can trace an important aspect of Qing political culture back to the period of Nurhaci as a logical extension of his political strategy of seeking parity in foreign relations. Once it became clear, in Nurhaci's eyes, that Heaven had chosen to support him, that parity, reflected in names of superior rank such as *han* or *qan/qayan*, was turned into a bid to challenge the Ming. He became not a Son of Heaven, but a leader born by Heavenly design.

The names of Nurhaci reflect a historical process that, in its twists and turns, belies the linear progression represented in official Qing historiography. At the same time we ought to recognize that Nurhaci's timing in acquiring his titles, and his care in presenting them as 'confirmation' of an acquired right, power, status, and divine investiture, already contain that narrative in embryonic form and prefigure its mystification. The early titles only reflected a local chief, and even the Chinese titles, as the Qianlong emperor pointed out, were not significant. But the relentless aspiration to a higher political station by a series of bids for diplomatic parity gained Nurhaci superior Mongol and Manchu titles. Manchu propaganda often resorted to the logic that Heaven favored those who did not sin against it, both to persuade other peoples (both Mongols and Manchus) to join them, and to justify *after the fact* the enslavement of their enemies by the force of arms. Yet this type of ideological pressure could only be predicated upon the condition of victory. Victory against China in 1619 propelled Nurhaci into a new order of political engagement that the new title, Enlightened Khan Born by Heavenly Design, confirmed and sustained.

Of course, the open challenge to China had already been launched with the establishment of the Latter Jin dynasty and with the promulgation of the 'Seven Grievances,' which was a real declaration of war. Both represented Nurhaci's political challenge to the Ming, but acquiring the title was the

confirmation of the success attained by that challenge. The accumulation of titles then can be seen as a series of confirmations on an ideal path towards ever greater achievements. In this light, it is not surprising that the notion of sovereignty in the Qing dynasty is conveyed by and embedded in a panoply of images and titles. Each of them should be seen, I believe, not as a political artifact meant to present the Qing emperors as rulers within a multiplicity of traditions, but as a partial and discrete affirmation of a given achievement within a broader political process. Each instance of title proclamation or attribution, in other words, was not an opportunistic move but the seal apposed to a given, and already acquired, political meaning that received in this way recognition and ritual confirmation. To go back then to the question of the myths associated to the figure of the 'dynastic founder' in Qing historiography, we should say that probably the seed of at least some of these 'myths' was sown by Nurhaci himself by a careful choice of titles that were marking as many political milestones.

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Chapter 8

Sülde.
La formation d'une terminologie militaro-politique chez les nomades médiévaux d'Eurasie[1].

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L'étude d'une culture politique et de sa genèse, c'est avant tout celle des termes utilisés pour légitimer le pouvoir, qu'il s'agisse du pouvoir d'un chef ou de celui d'une dynastie. L'un de ces termes-clé, chez les nomades des steppes d'Asie centrale au Moyen âge, est *sülde*. Son étude a déjà une longue histoire, qui débute avec le *sülde* de Chinggis Khan, mentionné en liaison avec les étendards à neuf ou surtout à quatre « queues ». Un tel *sülde* noir (*qara sülde*), ou *sülde*-étendard (*tuy sülde*), est conservé en Ordos ; c'est l'un des principaux objets sacrés du peuple mongol[2]. On doit à l'académicien B. Ja. Vladimircov d'avoir ouvert ce thème. Dès 1922, dans son *Chinggis Khan*, il écrit :

> L'étendard blanc à neuf queues (érigé pour son couronnement S.D.) est le gardien du génie du clan de Chinggis ; ce *sülde* protègera ses troupes, les conduira à la victoire et soumettra tous les gens, tous les pays, parce que le Ciel Bleu Éternel a ordonné à Chinggis Khan de 'gouverner tous les peuples'...

Les Mongols croient que l'âme de Chinggis s'est installée dans ce *sülde*-étendard, parce que lui-même est devenu le génie protecteur de son glorieux clan (Vladimircov 1922: 72). Développant ce thème dans son article de 1927, Vladimircov

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[1] Traduit du russe et adapté par Roberte Hamayon et Charles Stépanoff.
[2] Sur l'étendard noir, voir Chiodo 1997-1998.

caractérise le *sülde* comme « génie protecteur » du clan, c'est-à-dire « [son] âme, l'une de [ses] âmes ». Le *sülde* d'un grand homme devient le génie protecteur de son clan, de sa tribu, de son peuple. Il devient le génie des troupes et s'incarne dans l'étendard *tuγ*; aussi *sülde* et *tuγ* sont-ils synonymes (Vladimircov 1927: 23 n.2). Par la suite, dans son ouvrage classique *Le Régime social des Mongols*, Vladimircov revient à nouveau sur ce thème. Parlant du culte de l'étendard de Chinggis Khan, il écrit que son âme (*sü, sur, sür*) s'y trouve et que c'est la raison pour laquelle il est devenu le génie protecteur de son clan et des tribus mongoles qui lui sont soumises (Vladimircov 1934: 145). Cette hypothèse a été développée par les successeurs et commentateurs de Vladimircov (Novgorodova 1984, 1989; Rinčen 1974: 498; Galdanova 1987 etc.).

Heissig partage les vues de Vladimircov. Pour lui, le concept de *sülde* est apparu avec Chinggis Khan pour désigner le génie protecteur du Grand Khan, et est devenu avec le temps la divinité protectrice de tout le peuple mongol, recevant le nom de Sülde tengri ainsi qu'une place particulière au panthéon. Heissig pense être le premier à utiliser à son propos le terme chrétien de charisme, de sens proche (Heissig 1970: 392). Pour Rinčen en revanche, le Sülde noir et le Sülde blanc sont des personnages historiques réels dont se souvenaient les Borjigin [Borzigin] du XIIIe siècle et dont on peut rétablir les noms grâce aux hymnes qui leur étaient adressés (Rinčen 1975: 193).

Quant à Žukovskaja, elle s'attache à l'essence du culte du *sülde* et examine ce terme dans le cadre des représentations relatives à l'étendard, dans la ligne de Vladimircov. Pour elle, la fonction essentielle du *sülde* lors des campagnes militaires est d'apporter le succès et d'aider à s'emparer des villes et des forteresses de l'ennemi. Si le rituel spécifique d'invocation à Sülde tengri était correctement exécuté, il conférait la force du *sülde*, si bien que le récepteur n'avait plus à craindre ni les guerres, ni les ennemis, ni les brigands. Ce fut important surtout pour les Grands Khans qui succédèrent à Chinggis, chacun s'estimant possesseur de son propre *sülde*. Ainsi, le culte du *sülde* est-il un élément du culte de Chinggis Khan. Il s'identifie à l'étendard, dont le génie est devenu une divinité protectrice de l'armée et du peuple en général. Autrement dit, il y a fusion entre

les notions de *sülde* étendard et de *sülde* génie des troupes. Tant que le *sülde* étendard est entier, le peuple prospère. S'il lui arrive quelque chose, le malheur menace l'armée et le peuple. D'où le caractère sanglant du rite de consécration de l'étendard et de ses « queues » comme du sacrifice effectué en vue des campagnes militaires, dont les victimes pouvaient même être humaines (Žukovskaja 1977: 110).

Récemment, ce thème est devenu le sujet des recherches de Skrynnikova. Dans ses travaux (1987, 1989a & b, 1992a & b, 1992-1993, 1993, 1995, 1997 etc.), celle-ci traduit uniformément le mongol *sülde* par « charisme », ce qui apparaît plutôt comme une convention dans la mesure où ce sens résulte du développement qu'a connu ce concept dans un autre contexte socio-politique (Zubov 1994-1995). Pour elle, les termes *sülde, suu jeli, sünesün gegen* etc. « désignaient initialement un seul et même phénomène : la substance sacrale charismatique (de celui qui règne), de nature solaire, remplissant la fonction d'organiser la nature et le *socium*... ». Ce charisme était localisé dans la tête et se manifestait sous la forme d'une auréole ou d'un nimbe. Son porteur était le chef du clan (ou de la tribu). « *Sülde* est le nom de la substance qui défend son propre *socium*, et éloigne ou vainc l'autre » (Skrynnikova 1993: 164, 165, 188-9). L'auteur note que *sülde* ne s'est fixé qu'après Chinggis Khan pour désigner son charisme, alors que le charisme d'Ögedei était désigné par l'expression *sü jeli*, laquelle a été étendue à ses descendants (*ibid.* 165; 1997: 7 etc.).

Depuis Vladimircov, l'habitude s'est installée d'analyser *sülde* à partir de la racine *sül-*, interprétée dans le sens de la racine *sür-*. Ainsi Rinčen, étudiant les représentations animistes des Mongols, rapproche *sülde* de *sür, sünesün, sü~su*, termes qui pour lui désignent l'« âme immortelle », notamment celle des gens éminents, le « r » final indiquant que l'âme en question peut susciter la peur (Rinčen 1974: 498). Cette interprétation animiste a été soutenue par les auteurs de la monographie *Représentations traditionnelles des Turcs de Sibérie méridionale* (L'vova *et al.* 1989: 113-24). Un peu auparavant, Baskakov, lui aussi partisan de la théorie animiste, avait inclus les termes *djula* et *sür* des Turcs de l'Altaï, ainsi que ceux de *tyn* et *gyt*, dans la catégorie des noms de l'âme durant la vie. En outre, pour lui, « *sür* est la

substance matérielle de l'âme *djula*, qui prend telle ou telle apparence, le plus souvent celle du double du propriétaire du *djula* correspondant » (Baskakov 1973: 109-10)[3].

Sür est un terme très répandu dans les langues turques, où il désigne généralement l'une des « âmes » principales. « Cette notion draine un ensemble extrêmement complexe de représentations sur la nature de l'homme, dans une perspective d'unité des principes individuel et générique, naturel et social, divin et proprement humain » (L'vova *et al.* 1989: 113). Chez les autochtones de Sibérie méridionale, ce terme signifie « âme double », « fantôme », « spectre », « représentation », « image », « visage » (*ibid.* 113-120), reflétant l'essence énergétique de l'homme, son activité.

> Chez les Iakoutes, *sür* est la « personnification de l'énergie et de la force de volonté, plus généralement de la psyché humaine ; le plus haut degré de quelque chose ; l'âme de l'homme ou de l'animal, qui est donnée par Ulutujar Ulu Tojon vers lequel elle retourne après la mort, et qui ne peut être mangée par les *abasy* (mauvais esprits, SD) ; *sür kut* : âme vie » (Pekarskij 1958-1959: 2402). « D'un homme qui a une grande force de caractère et de volonté et qu'il est dangereux d'aborder, on dit qu'il est un 'homme à *sür*' (*süreeh kihi*). Plus généralement, on dit des animaux et de tout ce qui est effrayant et avec quoi il convient de lutter, qu'il a du *sür* » (Kulakovskij 1979: 61). D'où le second sens du mot *sür* en iakoute : « peur, effroi, épouvantail » (Pekarskij *ibid.*) ; d'où aussi *sürdä* : « faire quelque chose d'effrayant ; dépasser la mesure en quelque chose », et *süräh* (que Pekarskij compare avec le mongol *surtai* [*sürtej*]) : « terrible, effrayant, terrifiant, féroce, inhumain ; solide ; ayant une âme *sür* » (*ibid.*). Chez les Mongols comme chez les Kirghiz, *sür* signifie « grandeur, puissance » (Rudnev 1911: 122).

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[3] D. Funk a récemment critiqué cette tentative de Baskakov d'objectiver les discours altaïens sur les différentes « âmes » en un système de catégories rigides (Funk 2005: 26). En réalité, ces termes, souvent synonymes, se distinguent surtout par leur usage, qui relève plutôt d'un discours profane ou plutôt d'un discours chamanique (n.d.t.).

Tel est aussi précisément le champ sémantique du terme *sülde*. L'autorité de Vladimircov continue d'autant plus de planer sur ce terme que les interprétations ultérieures ont suivi son sillage. Nous allons tenter d'infléchir cette habitude, en prenant nos distances avec la tradition interprétative établie du terme *sülde*. Nous tiendrons compte du fait que sa racine n'est pas *sür* mais *sül*. De même, nous ne retiendrons pas l'hypothèse d'un rapprochement de cette racine sous sa forme *sul* avec celle de *jula*, tant l'interprétation en serait malaisée, comme le soulignent les auteurs de *Représentations traditionnelles des Turcs de Sibérie méridionale* :

> Nous ne pouvons donner une exégèse uniforme des sources de ces représentations qui n'ont pas un caractère systématique et dont seuls des fragments ont été conservés. Notons seulement que, en raison de réinterprétations et d'une possible mythologisation secondaire fondée sur une parenté phonétique, a pu se former, autour du terme *jula/tjula/dzula/sula/d'jula*, un complexe sémantique incluant des représentations sur la vie, sa durée, son contenu essentiel etc. [...] Sur tout ce qui compose ce complexe sémantique s'étend le concept de lumière, lié chez les Turcs aux représentations sur la vie. (L'vova *et al.*: 99).

Skrynnikova reprend cette hypothèse, voyant là un cas de polysémie. Elle discerne dans le terme qui nous intéresse un lien avec la nature solaire et compare ses dérivés avec le terme iranien *farn*. « 'Charisme', écrit-elle, figure parmi les sens de ce mot dans différentes langues iraniennes : 'chose bonne (faste)', 'chose désirée', 'bienfait', 'bien', 'grandeur', 'éclat', 'rayonnement', 'signe' etc. » (Skrynnikova 1997: 167). Il me semble cependant que c'est là une assertion contestable.

Revenons donc à la racine *sül-* et examinons d'abord un terme très répandu dans la culture traditionnelle des peuples turco-mongols, qui désigne les parties du corps de l'animal sacrificiel : *žülde/jüülde/iülde*. Pour moi, ce terme est directement lié à la racine qui nous intéresse. En mongol, il s'applique à la « tête de l'animal sacrificiel, détachée avec l'appareil respiratoire, les poumons, le foie, le cœur » (Bertagaev

1961: 132) ; à la « partie de carcasse d'animal, composée de la tête avec l'appareil respiratoire, les poumons et le foie » (Nominhanov 1975: 304, n.4). D'après les matériaux de Potanin, les Derbet [Dörbed] appellent *zjul'du* la « partie [offerte au feu] de la poitrine avec les viscères et la mâchoire inférieure ». Pour cet auteur, les chasseurs altaïens coupent cette partie de façon similaire ; ils la rapportent à la maison et l'accrochent à l'ouest de l'entrée, « là où, chez les Altaïens, pendent les pénates ». Une fois la viande nettoyée, on met la poitrine à bouillir avec la viande dans un chaudron ; certains participants retirent les os du chaudron, et enveloppent les morceaux restant – cœur, poumons etc. – dans le *zjul'du* avec un cordon de laine blanc (Potanin 1883: 90). Reprenant ce thème, L. P. Potapov écrit :

> Le chasseur qui a abattu l'animal recevait, en plus de la part égalitaire, le cœur, les poumons et la mâchoire inférieure (*jejen*)[4] de cet animal au motif qu'il devait 'régaler' des meilleurs morceaux ses 'esprits protecteurs'. Ce même jour ou le lendemain, le chasseur abandonnait ses camarades et revenait chez lui. Là, il suspendait le cœur et la mâchoire à l'angle antérieur où l'on plaçait d'ordinaire les figurations des 'esprits protecteurs' de la chasse, et il les y laissait toute la nuit. Au matin, on émiettait la viande qui était restée pendue toute la nuit, on la faisait cuire et toute la famille la mangeait [...] Les Chors eux-mêmes expliquaient... ce privilège par les représentations sur 'la chance à la chasse' (Potapov 1949: 35-6).

Selon les matériaux recueillis par K. V. Vjatkina chez les Mongols de la République populaire de Mongolie, le *züld* – symbole important et gage de chance à la chasse – est constitué des éléments suivants de l'animal tué : tête, cœur, langue, poumons, œsophage. C'est la part qui revient au chasseur, alors que, de toutes les autres parties du corps, on peut retirer des parts pour les parents. Quand le chasseur rapporte la proie à la maison,

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[4] Dans une nouvelle description de ce rite chez les Toubalars (2001: 112), Potapov donne le mot *jek* pour « mâchoire ». Dans son dictionnaire, Verbickij traduit *ek* par « menton, pommettes » (Verbickij 1884: 41) (n.d.t.).

son épouse doit lui ouvrir la porte et il doit poser le *züld* dans la moitié masculine de la yourte. Cependant, si le chasseur a tué avec un fusil qui n'était pas le sien, alors le *züld* appartient au propriétaire du fusil et doit être donné à sa famille. Quand l'animal abattu est comestible, le chasseur qui l'a tué prend sa peau et son *züld* (tête avec cœur, deux côtes et quatre os à moelle). Si l'animal n'est pas comestible, le chasseur n'en prend que la peau (Vjatkina 1960: 171, 242)[5]. Dans l'épopée kalmouke, *züld* désigne l'ensemble allant de la tête au cœur, lors du dépècement d'un cadavre (Todaeva 1976: 295). Dans *L'Histoire secrète des Mongols*, Dobun-Mergen, l'un des ancêtres de Chinggis Khan, conformément à la tradition, reçoit d'un chasseur urjanhaj rencontré la totalité du renne qu'il a tué, à l'exception du *zülde* avec les poumons et la peau (Pankratov 1998a: 45)[6].

    Ces morceaux rituels de l'animal sacrificiel qui vont aux esprits et dont le sens est « ce qui contient l'essence, l'âme de l'animal » ne sont en règle générale pas les plus goûteux. En kirghiz, *culdu* signifie « les restes piteux, les débris » (Judahin 1940: 136). C'est cependant dans ces morceaux qu'est supposée résider la chance originelle, rituellement significative, la chance à la chasse, d'où le destin :

> *zol* (mongol, bouriate) « bonheur, chance » (Čeremisov & Rumjancev 1937: 497),
> *čol* (touva) « destin, lot, bonheur », d'où *čoldug* « heureux » (Tenišev 1968: 538)
> *djol* (iakoute) « bien, prospérité, bonheur, fortune, chance, butin, trésor » (Pekarskij 1958-1959, t.1: 716, 838)
> *dzoluo/dzolo/zduluo* (iakoute) « bonheur, chance, adresse » (Pekarskij 1958-1959, t.1: 839),
> *dzol* (kazakh), « route, destin, vie » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 98), *joldu* (altaïen, teleut) « qui a un destin » (Radlov 1963, III-1: 438),

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[5] Sur la « chance » et les efforts pour l'obtenir et la garder, voir Žukovskaja 1988: 189, 86; sur la « chance », Romanova 1994: 104.

[6] Kozin traduit ce terme par « partie postérieure du corps d'un animal », ce qui rend Pankratov perplexe (Pankratov 1998b: 99).

> *sülde* (mongol) « bonheur, bénédiction, divinités domestiques, génies protecteurs » (Kovalevskij 1846, II: 1428), *süldetü* « heureux, béni ou protégé des dieux » (ibid. 1429),
>
> *dzoldu* (kazakh) « heureux » (Radlov 1963, IV-1: 99),
>
> *aq/qara çoltoi* (kirghiz) « qui apporte le bonheur/l'infortune » (Judahin 1940: 182).

Essayons de suivre l'évolution possible des concepts, et ce faisant, élargissons le champ qui, nous semble-t-il, est lié à la racine *sul/sül*[7] en prenant en compte les données linguistiques altaïques. Notre hypothèse est que *sul/sül* appartient à une racine pan-altaïque qui a donné une multiplicité de formes. On distingue en particulier la série *coi/coj/coit/coijuu/cajal/cei/sala/soj/šola/sala/s'v'/salh/šulh* qui a pour sens de base « écorcher le corps d'une bête sauvage », « détacher la peau du corps d'un animal », « dépouiller, dépecer », « se séparer, se déchirer »[8]. En cherchant à définir le champ sémantique de cette racine, nous voyons que le thème du dépècement de l'animal dont nous faisons l'étymon s'est développé en un concept plus général d'enlèvement de la couche supérieure de quelque chose[9]. On peut aussi relier à cet étymon le thème de l'abattage d'un animal[10]. De plus, le motif du dépècement ou de l'écorchement de la peau dans son sens initial nous renvoie à la vie de chasse, avec laquelle ce terme a un lien

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[7] Je remercie le professeur D. M. Nasilov pour la consultation qu'il m'a accordée au cours de ce travail.

[8] Radlov 1963 IV-1: 237, 289, 290, 513, 515, 626; Judahin 1940: 442; Todaeva 1976: 372, 496; Todaeva 1986: 161; Baskakov & Toščakova 1947: 129; Rudnev 1911: 160; DTS: 707; Cincius (dir.) 1977: 123-4; Bijaliev 1967: 78; Kurpeško-Tannagaševa & Apon'kin 1993: 48 etc.

[9] Citons par exemple : *soj-* « enlever la couche supérieure » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 513), *sojyl* « être enlevé (d'une peau, d'un vêtement) (DTS: 507) *sojun* (chagatai, osm., krym.) « glisser, tomber, se dévêtir » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 536), *selde/seldöö* (kirghiz) « racler la viande et la graisse d'une peau ou d'un boyau » (Judahin 1940: 127), *sojuntu* (osm.) « ce qui a été enlevé, coquille, cosse, écale » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 536).

[10] *Sui* (kazan) « tuer d'un coup de couteau un animal » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 237), *soi* « tuer du bétail » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 513).

direct[11]. Ainsi, le thème du cadeau de chasse nous mène vers la sphère des pratiques cynégétiques et sacrificielles. Comme l'écrit E. S. Novik, c'est dans le sacrifice que l'aspect de communication entre les mondes apparaît particulièrement net : il s'accompagne d'ordinaire de formules verbales dans lesquelles est précisé ce qui est attendu en retour.

> Le fait de voir dans le sacrifice un moyen de 'disposer' le partenaire de communication en sorte qu'il adopte la conduite désirée permet [...] de décrire les particularités structurelles fondamentales de ces rituels. On peut définir leur contenu comme une 'transmission' de communication – en l'occurrence sous forme d'un bien de valeur – conduisant à 'recevoir' ce qui est désiré – en l'occurrence sous forme de don en retour (Novik 1984: 135-40).

Ce caractère dialogique de la relation au monde autre et à sa population, desquels dépendent la chance à la chasse et l'aisance qui s'ensuit, trouve écho dans le terme suivant : *čoluk* (touva) « offrande, sacrifice » (Tenišev 1968: 539), *joluk* (ouigour) offrande » (Radlov 1963 III-2: 2178), *sojut* (kirghiz) « animal destiné à l'abattage (Judahin 1940: 443), *julug* « rançon -> offrande » (DTS: 278)[12]. On pourrait citer également toute une série de termes suggérant que le caractère dialogique de ces rapports débouche sur le thème de la récompense, qui est étroitement lié à celui de l'offrande. Ceci mènerait à avancer l'idée que la ligne du profit peut s'étendre au thème du commerce et à celui de l'exploitation.

Mais revenons au contexte du sacrifice envisagé comme communication. Au cours du sacrifice, selon le système de signes ainsi créé, le partenaire de communication doit expédier l'« âme » de l'animal sacrificiel, c'est-à-dire ce qui, de lui, à la fois représente le plus pleinement l'objet transmis et constitue le

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[11] *Dzolduk* (kazakh) « part à laquelle on a droit » (Radlov 1963 IV-1: 99), *sauga/soga* (kazakh) « don provenant du butin du chasseur, que reçoit un chasseur de rencontre » (ibid. 124), *soius* (kirghiz) « cadeau sous forme d'animal (destiné à l'abattage) » (Judahin 1940: 443).

[12] Ces termes seraient à rattacher à la racine *jul-* « racheter ; sauver » selon Clauson 1972: 925 (n.d.t.).

don le plus approprié à celui qui le reçoit. D'où l'existence de procédés particuliers de mise à mort et de démembrement du cadavre, distincts de la manière habituelle d'abattre les animaux domestiques et voués à faciliter l'extraction « correcte » de son « âme ». Ce pouvait être l'étouffement, l'arrachage de l'aorte, le recueil du sang, c'est-à-dire des manipulations liées au souffle ou au sang, « réceptacles » (ou signes) fondamentaux de l'« âme ». La coutume de conserver en entier la peau, les os des membres, la tête et les sabots, témoigne du souci d'assurer le contact, la possibilité de recevoir des esprits des choses précieuses (Novik 1984: 140)[13].

Toutes ces positions sur lesquelles Novik attire l'attention trouvent écho dans le lexique lié à la racine qui nous intéresse. Dans nombre de langues turques, la partie sacrificielle du corps de l'animal est désignée par le terme *kolga* (koïbal, chor) ou *kolka* : « viscères de l'animal que reçoit le chamane lors du festin sacrificiel » (Radlov 1963 II-1: 593). *Kolka* chez les Kirghiz désigne « les grands vaisseaux sanguins près du cœur, *kolko* chez les Téléoutes, « les veines épaisses près du cœur » (Radlov *ibid.*). Selon Verbickij (dont Radlov a utilisé les matériaux), *kolga* signifie les « viscères de l'animal : gorge, cœur, foie, poumons, parties de l'animal destinées au chamane » (Verbickij 1884: 140). Ce mot est lié à la racine *hol*, dont le sens dans les langues turco-mongoles, selon l'analyse de Nominhanov, est :

youl (mongol) « essentiel, fondamental, noyau » ;
gol (halh) « milieu, centre, tige, noyau », *gol sudas/gol*
     sudal (halh) « aorte ; fig. vie » ;
ulaan gol (vieux kalmouk) « bases rouges (de la vie),
     vaisseaux sanguins ; âme en tant que force de
     vie », *gol sudasun* (vieux kalmouk) « artère » ;
gol (bouriate) « cœur, milieu, centre, tige ; veine,
     artère, vaisseau sanguin (notamment le long de
     la colonne vertébrale chez les animaux) » ;

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[13] Sur les règles de découpe du corps de l'animal tué, voir Gurvič 1977: 201-2 ; pour une description des méthodes de découpe rituelle, voir Verbickij 1893: 50-1 *sq.*

gol sudas/gol sudal (halh) « aorte ; fig. vie » ;
qol (ouigour) « colonne dorsale, partie du dos le long
de la colonne, tronc » etc. (Nominhanov 1975:
213).

Ce qui ressort, nous semble-t-il, de notre analyse du champ sémantique de la racine *sul-/sül-*, c'est un enchaînement assez précis traçant une possible évolution sémantique depuis le thème du dépècement du corps de l'animal tué par le chasseur vers la catégorie assez abstraite de « chance, fortune, *fart*[14], destin », vers le *sülde* de Chinggis Khan. Et il n'y a alors plus lieu de supposer, comme l'ont fait plusieurs auteurs, l'existence d'un lien étymologique avec le sens de « lumière », « soleil » etc. C'est alors la recherche philologique couplée avec le matériel ethnographique et épique qui nous donne la possibilité de suivre l'histoire de la formation du concept de « chance » ou *fart* dans le contexte de la vie de chasse et son évolution ultérieure. Comme le note S. Nekljudov, « le modèle mythologique du monde des chasseurs ne conserve pas longtemps son charme d'unicité conceptuelle » (Nekljudov 1989: 187). Et comme souvent, de nombreux concepts élaborés lors d'étapes antérieures de l'existence de la communauté humaine entrent dans la culture et le vocabulaire des suivantes (Frejdenberg 1976: 19). Mais leur sens initial change, de façon plus ou moins sensible, comme celui de « charisme », qui n'est pas le même dans le Proche-Orient antique, dans la scholastique chrétienne médiévale, et dans la politologie des temps nouveaux.

Tel a également été le destin de ce concept fondamental de la culture cynégétique des peuples turco-mongols qu'est *sül* —> *sülde* (sans les variantes phonétiques citées plus haut) en tant que forme particulière du concept général de « chance, destin... ». À mesure que changeaient la situation socio-politique et la vision du monde, les représentations cosmologiques se sont

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[14] Nous remercions François Ömer Akakça de nous avoir indiqué des liens vers des dictionnaires turcs et vers le dictionnaire étymologique de Fasmer (http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/main.cgi?flags=wygtmnl) ; selon ce dernier, *fart* vient de l'allemand *Fahrt* « trace [d'une proie possible] » dans la langue des chasseurs, d'où « chance » (n.d.t.).

tout naturellement adaptées aux conditions des époques ultérieures. Il s'agit en l'occurrence du changement d'agent « donneur de bien ». Dans la société de chasse, le donneur est le maître du lieu et des animaux sauvages qui y vivent, et c'est de lui que le chasseur reçoit la chance sous sa forme matérielle, le gibier. C'est sur ce moment de « veine », de « réussite » qu'est fondée ce que l'on appelle l'« économie de prestige » de la société pré-étatique. Du fait qu'il obtient, grâce à la « chance », des biens matériels sous la forme de butin de chasse, le chef potentiel les distribue généreusement pour acquérir une plus grande autorité au sein de sa communauté. Plus il distribue, plus s'accroît son prestige, et plus lourd pèsent ses arguments pour diriger (Mauss 1996 ; Vasil'ev 1980: 172-86).

Même si la structure socio-politique se complexifie, la conduite du chef ne change pas. Il doit avant tout rester chanceux, « fortuné, heureux », puisqu'il s'agit de pourvoir tous les autres en biens matériels, comme le montre en particulier S. G. Kljaštornyj à propos de la culture politique des anciens Turcs en un tel moment :

> Dans toutes les inscriptions des Qaγan [Kaghan] turcs, [...] il est répété avec insistance que seuls les Qaγan [...] sont capables de 'nourrir le peuple'. Dans les fragments demeurés intacts de l'inscription de Bugut cette formule est répétée trois fois : à propos de Muhan Qaγan (553-572) il est dit qu'il 'nourrissait bien le peuple', Bilge Qaγan rappelle constamment aux 'auditeurs' qu'il a 'vêtu le peuple nu', 'nourri le peuple affamé', 'enrichi le peuple pauvre', que grâce à lui 'le peuple turc a beaucoup acquis', que 'pour le peuple turc', lui et son frère cadet Kül Tegin ne sont pas restés sans rien faire [le jour] et n'ont pas dormi la nuit'[15]

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[15] Il est dit explicitement dans l'inscription à Kül Tegin : « Par faveur du ciel et parce que j'avais moi-même de la chance [*qut*], je suis devenu Qaγan. » (DTS: 471). Louis Bazin insiste sur l'appartenance des termes *sur/sür* et *qut* à un même champ sémantique et sur leur fréquente association, notamment en iakoute où ils forment un couple bien attesté ayant le sens de « force vitale » (1987: 216 et *passim*) (n.d.t.).

[...] Bilge Tonyukuk mentionne les 'inlassables acquisitions' pour le peuple turc réalisées par El'teriš Qaɣan et lui-même » (Kljaštornyj 1986: 323).

Cependant, en situation de changement, le mode et le niveau de sanction changent. Ainsi, lorsque se forme un gouvernement monarchique, se forme aussi ce qu'on peut appeler un panthéon monarchique, et la forme de légitimité qui se concrétise par la « grâce » du chef doit être reçue d'un pouvoir sacral supérieur. Ce pouvoir légitimant dépendait donc de la nature de ce panthéon. Dans la variante mongole, comme dans la tradition nomade antérieure, le pouvoir légitimant était le pouvoir du Ciel et des entités censées y résider. C'est lui qui était censé donner au chef le bonheur, la grâce (au sens concret et non abstrait) qui confirmait sa légitimité. Et c'est à l'aide de cette grâce/chance qu'il gouvernait, distribuant ses fruits à ses sujets. La nature des biens escomptés change également : alors que la société de chasse attendait avant tout du gibier, la société pastorale espérait la préservation et l'accroît du cheptel, et la société agricole, les faveurs du climat.

Il nous faut aussi prendre en compte le fait que la guerre était appréhendée dans des termes proches de la chasse même dans les formations socio-politiques postérieures à celle correspondant à la vie de chasse. La prise d'un gros animal, d'un ours par exemple, était vue comme un duel avec un adversaire sur un pied d'égalité. Après l'avoir vaincu, on traitait les restes de cet animal avec un maximum de respect. Il en allait de même pour les gens vaincus, en particulier pour tout homme faisant figure de chef, que l'on appelait « homme fort », de même encore pour les victimes sacrificielles humaines (Hangalov 1959: 206). On utilisait pour eux les mêmes termes que pour les animaux tués à la chasse, et plus tard pour les animaux domestiques sacrifiés. Dans l'épopée kalmouke, le terme *züld*, utilisé par ailleurs au sens de butin de chasse, figure aussi dans les passages relatant une victoire du héros : « il suspendit les 38 restes [de l'ennemi] sur les côtés droit et gauche [de la yourte] » (Todaeva 1976: 296).

Selon diverses sources, le meurtre de Jamuqa [Zamuqa] a été organisé de façon très ritualisée. Signe du statut particulier de cet homme, qui avait été l'ami juré de Chinggis Khan et en

même temps l'un de ses principaux rivaux dans la lutte pour le pouvoir dans la steppe, il fut mis à mort d'une façon particulière. Dans *L'Histoire secrète des Mongols*, pour justifier sa prétention à ce type de mise à mort, Jamuqa lui-même s'adresse à Chinggis Khan en ces termes :

> Si possible, en me mettant à mort, fais-le sans verser mon sang. Quand mort je reposerai, avec mes ossements, en une terre *(etügen)* élevée, éternellement, jusqu'aux descendants de tes descendants, je te protègerai (Kozin 1941: 157; cité d'après la traduction de Even et Pop, 1994: 269, §201).

Selon Rashid ad-Din, les membres de Jamuqa furent détachés un par un.

> Jamuqa avait dit : 'le droit vous appartient ! J'avais pensé obtenir l'aide du ciel et pouvoir vous couper en morceaux. Mais puisque l'aide du ciel est apparue de votre côté, coupez-moi en morceaux au plus vite !' Et il s'était hâté de leur montrer ses articulations, disant 'coupez ici', et il n'avait absolument pas peur (Rashid ad-Din 1952 I-1: 191-2).

La version de Rashid ad-Din se distingue souvent de celle des auteurs de l'*Histoire secrète*. Ceci s'explique par l'assez grand laps de temps écoulé entre leurs récits respectifs, près de 70 ans. La version de la chronique de 1240 paraît plus proche de la vérité que celle de Rashid ad-Din. La mise à mort « sans effusion de sang » est attestée pour l'abattage des animaux rituels et le meurtre des membres du groupe dirigeant. Dans l'un et l'autre cas, elle suit un même scénario et vise un même but. Plusieurs sources nous informent sur cette technique de mise à mort d'un animal sans effusion de sang. Arrêtons-nous sur l'une d'entre elles, qui donne quelques détails intéressants pour notre propos : la description de V. Verbickij, qui fut missionnaire orthodoxe dans l'Altaï dans la seconde moitié du XIXᵉ siècle. Voici comment il décrit la mise à mort d'un cheval sacrificiel sans verser son sang :

> On place le cheval tête vers l'est, on lie son mufle *[sic S.D.]* avec une corde, on attache aussi ses membres avec une

corde ; puis on lui met une grosse perche sur le dos, et on tire ses membres des deux côtés tout en appuyant la perche sur le sol, et ainsi on lui casse le dos. On tamponne tous les orifices de l'animal avec de l'herbe pour qu'il n'en sorte pas de sang. Si le cheval se débat longtemps, le *kam* [chamane, S.D.] prend un petit pain [*kuruj*, encore un terme pour dire « chance », S.D.][16]. Chez les Kalmouks [il s'agit ici de l'ancien nom des Altaïens, n.d.t.], on prend une tasse et, l'offrant au cheval, on dit '*kurujljap-jat, kurujljap-jat, op kuruj, op kuruj, op kuruj*' (Verbickij 1893: 50). Ceci signifie : j'attraperai la chance ou la force restante, sortant avec la vie, pour le croît [du bétail]. C'est le maître de maison qui mange le petit pain, poursuit Verbickij, et il y tient à tel point qu'il n'en donne à personne d'autre qu'à ceux de sa famille. Puis on enlève la peau et on la suspend sur une perche *tju-kele*. Ensuite on coupe la viande en menus morceaux, en séparant les os aux articulations sans les casser.

La cérémonie de mise à mort d'un membre du clan du khan sans effusion de sang implique l'étouffement, qui peut aussi être mis en œuvre pour un animal sacrificiel. Lors de la mise à mort d'un animal, sauvage ou domestique, comme lors du meurtre d'un personnage important, selon toute vraisemblance, le but essentiel est la conservation, la « capture » de la substance qui s'en va, du souffle, et s'agissant d'humains, sa préservation au sein du clan ou son inclusion dans le circuit de parenté (D'jakonova 1975: 91).

La coutume est très répandue de « saisir la chance » de quelqu'un qui a mené une vie longue et heureuse, et qui a eu de nombreux enfants et petits-enfants – ce qui est l'une des manifestations de la chance ; pour cela, au moment des funérailles, on tente de couper le cortège funéraire en courant (par exemple Snesarev 1969: 125-6). Inversement, on fait son possible pour ne pas laisser la « chance » partir du clan, de la famille. Ainsi, lors des funérailles de Chinggis Khan, tous ceux qui se trouvaient sur le trajet du cortège funéraire menant à la

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[16] Selon Verbickij, c'est le petit pain sur lequel le chamane capture la force de l'animal en train d'expirer.

sépulture furent tués (Rashid ad Din 1952: 233), pour la raison rendue évidente par l'exemple précédent.

Comme l'écrit Skrynnikova, dans la période qui a précédé l'avènement au trône de Chinggis Khan, le concept de *sülde* « était d'emploi assez courant » dans la terminologie politique. Mais après la mort de Chinggis Khan, il perd tout usage politique et reste exclusivement associé au culte de ce dernier (Skrynnikova 1995: 150). L'auteur explique cette disparition par l'existence de termes équivalents désignant le même concept et en donne la liste (Skrynnikova 1997: 7), mais, comme elle l'admet elle-même, cette explication est discutable.

Pour la clarté de la démonstration étymologique, examinons la construction morphologique de *sülde* dans la grammaire des langues altaïques. L'affixe apposé sur la racine *sül* : *-d/-de/-du/-do/-da/-t/-tu/-ta/-to*, est très répandu dans ces langues, et l'alternance *d/t* y est assez courante (Vladimircov 1989: 385; Cydendambaev 1979: 17-18; Todaeva 1951: 37-8 etc.)[17]. Il fournit, pour Orlovskaja, le suffixe le plus productif de formation d'adjectifs sur des bases nominales. Les adjectifs ainsi formés s'appliquent à ce qui possède les propriétés de l'objet ou du phénomène désigné par la base, ou à ce qui y a trait : ainsi *ünet* « précieux », formé sur *üne* « prix » (Orlovskaja 1961: 91).

> En mongol, l'affixe *-t*, ainsi que l'affixe *-taj/-toj/-tej* qui en est proche par le sens, forme des adjectifs exprimant « une qualité supérieure, l'abondance, la capacité, l'assimilation » : *baširt* « rusé, malicieux » (*bašir* « ruse »), *gajt* « malheureux, désastreux » (*gaj* « malheur, calamité »), *bajart* « joyeux » (*bajar* « joie ») (Todaeva 1951: 77-8). En bouriate, l'affixe *-ta/-te/-to* forme des adjectifs exprimant la possession d'une chose – *hahalta* « barbu » (*hahal* « barbe ») –, d'une propriété, *gerelte* « lumineux » (*gerel* « lumière »), *dülete* « enflammé » (*dülen* « flamme »), *soloto* « célèbre, illustre » (*solo* « gloire ») – ou le rapport à quelque chose *angita* « de classe » (*angi* « classe ») –

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[17] Le suffixe *d-/-t* sert à former le datif-locatif dans les langues mongoles, et dans les langues turques, sous la forme *de/da, te/ta*, le locatif (Sevortjan 1956; ŠČerbak 1962: 106) (n.d.t.).

(Sanžeev dir. 1962: 109-10). En kalmouk, le suffixe *-t/-ta* forme des qualificatifs de possession *elsta gazr* « lieu sablonneux », litt. lieu qui a du sable, *evta jumn* « chose commode », chose qui présente une certaine commodité (Sanžeev 1940: 34-5).

Les usages de cet affixe *-d/-de* nous confirment dans la conviction que, dans *sülde,* il y a l'idée de posséder de la « chance », en l'occurrence l'idée de la « chance » de Chinggis Khan. Toutefois, nos matériaux nous ont montré que tous les chefs avaient du *sül,* qu'ils étaient *sülde,* détenteurs de *sül,* et que, pour cette raison, la course était âpre pour les suivre. À mesure qu'il triomphait des résistances, supprimant physiquement ses rivaux, ou les faisant passer de son côté avec leur *sül,* Chinggis Khan accumulait tous les *sül.* La conception même de création d'un État monarchique exclut l'existence de chefs ayant un *sül* distinct. Unissant en lui la « chance » commune, Chinggis Khan en distribuait à ses parents et compagnons d'armes, notamment en les envoyant en campagne. On peut considérer comme une variante de cette distribution les petits étendards *tuγ* qui, à la différence de l'étendard principal, étaient appelés *inci/ilci* « envoyés, ambassadeurs ». Ainsi, tous les succès au combat, toutes les conquêtes apparaissent comme les fruits du *sül,* de la « chance », du *fart,* de Chinggis Khan. Ce moment est précisément fixé dans l'*Histoire secrète des Mongols* sous l'année 1211 : après sa défaite, l'empereur de la dynastie Jin envoie son gouverneur général Qadai à la rencontre des émissaires de Chinggis Khan partis faire le compte des trophées, avec des tissus brodés d'or en guise de cadeaux.

Alors Sigi-Qutuqu [l'un des envoyés de Chinggis, S.D.] dit à Qadai : 'autrefois ces choses, de même que Chung-tu [Zhongdu, la capitale du centre, Pékin (n.d.t.)], étaient à Altan Khan [l'empereur de la dynastie Jin (n.d.t.)], elles sont aujourd'hui à Cinggis Qaγan. Comment oses-tu, te cachant comme un voleur, distribuer les biens de Cinggis Qaγan ?' Ayant dit ces mots, Sigi-Qutuqu ne prit pas les présents, Önggür-ba'urci et Arqai-Qasar les prirent. Cinggis Qaγan en fut mécontent et réprimanda sévèrement Orgur et Arqai, mais, à l'égard de Sigi-Qutuqu, il se montra bienveillant :

Sülde

« tu tiens dans tes pensées le Grand Yasa » (Kozin 1941: 181-2 ; §252 de *L'Histoire Secrète des Mongols*).

Lors du couronnement de Chinggis Khan, ses compagnons d'armes avaient promis de lui donner tout leur butin de chasse et de guerre. Telle était la formulation habituelle des rapports de vassalité à l'égard du chef souverain. Elle s'explique ainsi : le chef ne pouvant que répartir le *sül*, il était légitime et logique qu'il exige de recevoir sa part de butin de tous les parents et sujets ; d'où sa colère quand il ne la recevait pas (Kozin 1941: 188). Ces rapports se reflètent dans l'étiquette, forme ritualisée des rapports de pouvoir, qui n'émane donc pas d'un lieu vide. Habituelle chez les dirigeants, la générosité se fonde sur l'observance du protocole socio-religieux. Ainsi, comme dit Babur « quand j'arrivai, Humajun me remit ce diamant, et je le redonnai à Humajun (Babur-Name 1958: 312). Dans ce jeu d'étiquette, ce qui compte est le moment de la réception du butin, marqué de la « chance » de Babur, puis de sa légalisation chez son possesseur – celui qui l'avait directement trouvé.

La conclusion principale de notre recherche est que les représentations liées au terme *sül/sülde* remontent aux traditions cynégétiques des peuples d'Asie centrale et de Sibérie. C'est du cœur de la vie de chasse que vient la notion de « chance », de « fortune », de *fart*, propriété sans laquelle il serait impossible de prendre du gibier, source de vie essentielle. Au cours de l'évolution de la société et avec l'émergence de confédérations proto-étatiques ou étatiques, la terminologie de la culture cynégétique a été utilisée pour exprimer les concepts des sociétés stratifiées qu'étaient les États nomades. Ces concepts qui, initialement étaient concrets, voire naturalistes, sont alors devenus abstraits. La source de cette évolution chez les Mongols est la formation du concept du *sülde* de Chinggis Khan. Celui-ci est devenu un concept cultuel large, et a acquis, sous les Gengiskhanides, un caractère théologique en raison de la personnalisation du culte pan-mongol de ce grand chef.

Références

Abréviations :
AN = Akademija Nauk, Académie des Sciences
DTS = Drevnetjurkskij slovar' (voir bibliographie).
VL = Vostočnaja Literatura (maison d'édition).
SSSR = URSS

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Chapter 9

Structure Of Society And Power
In The Ancient Inner Asian Nomadic Empires:
Xiongnu And Xianbei[1]

Nikolai N. Kradin

Introduction

The history of the Xiongnu and Xianbei is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the ancient Eurasian steppe peoples. At the turn of the third and second centuries BC, the Xiongnu established the first steppe empire, by federating several Inner Asian societies. Over a period of 250 years, a dramatic confrontation took place between the Xiongnu and their southern neighbor – the Chinese Han dynasty. At the end of the first century AD, the Xiongnu era in Inner Asia was over. The next hundred years saw domination by the Xianbei of the Inner Asian steppes.

The history of the Xiongnu is known to us through several records: the *Shi ji* [Records of the Grand Historian], chapter 110; the *Han shu* [History of the Han Dynasty], chapter 94A; the *Hou Han shu* [History of the Later Han Dynasty, hereafter *HHS*], chapter 79;[2] as well as by archaeological findings in the territories of Mongolia, Russia and China.[3] At

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[1] Adapted by Isabelle Charleux and Roberte Hamayon, with the help of an anonymous external reader to whom we are thankful for very relevant remarks on a previous version of this paper. Unfortunately we had from the author no answers to our various questions, and eventually decided to suppress some unclear or insufficiently documented passages.

[2] These sources have been translated into European languages: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958; Bičurin 1950 [1851]; Groot 1921; Watson 1961; Taskin 1968, 1973.

[3] Doržsüren 1961; Umehara 1960; Rudenko 1969; Konovalov 1976; Davydova 1995; *idem* 1996.

present, several studies[4] tackle different aspects of the history and culture of the Xiongnu society. Still, many questions remain unsolved and debatable. This paper will consider some of these problems.

The main sources on Xianbei history are three Chinese chronicles: the *Hou Han shu*, chapter 90; the *Wei shu* [History of the Wei Dynasty, hereafter *WS*], chapter 30; and the *Sanguo zhi* [Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms]. These texts have been translated into Russian (Bičurin 1950 [1851]: 149-59; Taskin 1984: 70-86) and European (Schreiber 1947; Mullie 1969) languages. For a long time, archaeological sites of Xianbei were not known. It is only recently that cemeteries of Xianbei culture have been excavated in China and the eastern Baikal area.[5]

The Structure of Xiongnu Society and Power

A *chanyu* was at the head of the Xiongnu empire. In official documents produced at the height of Xiongnu power, the *chanyu* was described as 'born from heaven and earth, raised by the sun and moon, great *chanyu* of the Xiongnu' (Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 30). The *chanyu* used raids to obtain the political support of the tribes that were the constituent members of the 'imperial confederation.' Furthermore, using the threats of raids, he extorted from the Han empire gifts (to be distributed among relatives, tribal chieftains and armed forces), and the right for all of his subjects to trade with the Chinese in border areas. In internal affairs, on the other hand, the *chanyu* had much less authority. The majority of political decisions at the local level were made by tribal chiefs.

Thomas Barfield assumes that Han politicians may have relied on simple human avidity, hoping that dizzy with the quantity and diversity of the rare wonders they had given him the *chanyu* would store them up in his treasury or squander them in extravagant behavior. The Chinese officials probably did not, however, fully understand the principles of the steppe ruler's power. The status of the ruler of a nomadic empire depended, on

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[4] Egami 1948; Bernštam 1951; Gumilev 1960; Ma Changshou 1962; Davydova 1985; Sühbaatar 1980; Di Cosmo 2002.
[5] Su Bai 1977; Gan Chigeng and Sun Suzeng 1982; Mi Wenping 1994; Yu Suhua 2002; Yaremčuk 2004; *idem* 2005.

the one hand, on providing his subjects with gifts and material wealth and, on the other hand, on the military capacity to make raids and extort gifts, which he would then redistribute to his followers. The necessity to support the stability of the military-political structure rather than personal avidity was the reason for the *chanyu*'s ceaseless demands to Han to increase its bestowals. The gravest insult that could be made to a steppe ruler was the accusation of stinginess. Spoils of war, gifts from the Han emperors and international trade were the main sources of political power in the steppe. And the gifts that then flowed through the ruler's hands not only did not weaken but, on the contrary, strengthened his power and influence in the imperial confederation (Barfield 1992 [1989]: 36-60).

In the eyes of Chinese historians, the Xiongnu empire was seen as an expansionistic state with autocratic power. In fact, however, it was a quite fragile mechanism. Even during periods of highest prosperity of the Xiongnu polity (under Mode/Maodun and his first successor), the military-hierarchical system only co-existed with and overlay the complicated genealogical hierarchy of tribes; it never fully transformed them. In theory, the *chanyu* could demand explicit obedience from his subjects and issue any command he wished. But his political might was really quite limited. First, the power of the Xiongnu empire remained supratribal, because (a) membership in the confederation provided tribes with political independence from neighbors and a number of other significant advantages, and (b) the *chanyu* and his close circle of relatives guaranteed for the tribes a particular inner autonomy within the empire. Secondly, the actual power of the tribal chiefs and elders was autonomous from the policy of the centre. When a tribe became dissatisfied by the policy of the center, the whole tribe or a part of it fled to the south seeking China's help.

The *chanyu* had numerous relatives who belonged to his own clan, the Luandi: brothers and nephews, wives, sons and daughters etc. Besides the relatives of the *chanyu*, other noble clans (Huyan, Lan, Xubu and Qiulin) belonged to the highest Xiongnu aristocracy. The next level in the Xiongnu hierarchy was occupied by tribal chiefs and elders. In the annals, they are mentioned, as a rule, as 'subordinate kings,' 'chief comman-

dants,' 'household administrators,' or *qiuqu* officials.[6] Some of the 'chiefs of a thousand' were probably tribal chiefs. The 'chiefs of a hundred' and 'chiefs of ten' were, most likely, lower-ranking clan leaders. Economic, judicial, cultural, fiscal and military functions were considered to be the responsibilities of chiefs and elders. The chiefs of non-Xiongnu tribes that were members of the imperial confederation were on a slightly lower rank in the hierarchical ladder. In addition, the Xiongnu also had a stratum of service nobility – advisers (who were immigrants from China) – and bodyguards.

Most of the population of the Xiongnu empire were, of course, ordinary pastoral nomads. On the base of some indirect data, one can assume that many important features of economy, social organization and way of life were essentially little different from the features of the nomads of the Mongolian steppes of more recent times.[7]

In the written sources, there is no information concerning the different categories of indigents or semi-free populations who were engaged in pastoralism within the Xiongnu society. It is also unknown whether there were slaves. The apparent lack of development of slavery in the Xiongnu society can be explained by some cross-cultural anthropological studies that clearly demonstrate that slavery has never become widespread in any pastoral society.[8] Those researchers are most likely right, who believe that the overwhelming majority of prisoners of war in the Xiongnu society were engaged in agricultural and handicraft in special established settlements.[9] However, as to their social-economic and legal position, the majority of these persons (many free deserters) were not enslaved. Their social status probably varied from conditional vassalage to some kind of serfdom. The Ivolginsk fortress

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[6] Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 17; see also Groot 1921: 55; Watson 1961: 163-4; Taskin 1968: 40.

[7] Egami 1956; *idem* 1963; Kradin 2002: 160-5.

[8] For details see Nieboer 1907: 237-65; Hazanov 1975: 133-48; Khazanov 1984: 160-1; Kradin 1992: 100-11.

[9] Gumilev 1960: 147; Davydova 1975: 145; Rudenko 1969; Hazanov 1975: 143-4.

(below Ivolga), near the city Ulan-Ude in Buryatia, was a classic settlement of such type.[10]

The archaeological data supplement, to a great extent, the information found in chronicles. The higher an individual's status, the greater the expenses for construction of tomb and the splendid implements buried with the dead therein. Monumental structures defined this sacred space, which symbolized the divine nature of earthly power: these are burial mounds with a *dromos*, i.e. a path to the other world.

According to archaeological data, even before the formation of the nomadic empire, social stratification had existed in Xiongnu society. At the bottom of the society were the ordinary burial places of ordinary nomads. At the top were the graves of the members of the tribal ruling elite, in which have been found a great quantity of adornments for chariots, finely made arms and armor, jewelry and plates with gold images of animals, rods, pommels of banners etc.[11]

Social stratification increased even more during periods when the Xiongnu were at the height of their power (after 209 BC). The monumental burial grounds of Xiongnu lords located in Noyon-Uul, Borbulag, Gol Mod etc. (in Mongolia), as well as those at Il'movaya Pad', Caraam and Örgöntoi (in southern Buryatia), required considerable efforts for their construction.

So, for example, the best known of the Xiongnu burial mounds in Noyon-Uul, investigated in 1924-1925 by the Kozlov expedition, represents a structure with a rectangular terrace of 14x16 m. in area and more than 1.5 m. in height. The grave pit goes down by steep ledges to the depth of 9 m. On the south side, the pit has flatter slopes, which are fringed by stone blocks. At the bottom, there is a coffin coated with varnish and paint, lying within two chests. The inner surface of the chests was draped with refined wool carpets and silk cloths. The deceased was accompanied with rich funeral implements (Umehara 1960; Rudenko 1969). Some very interesting results were also excavated in other mounds in Noyon-Uul some years ago, and

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[10] Davydova 1968; *idem* 1985; *idem* 1995; *idem* 1996; Hayashi 1984.
[11] Burial ground of Aluchaideng and Xigoupan in Inner Mongolia, China: Tian Guangjin and Guo Suxin 1980a; *idem* 1980b.

also in Gol Mod in the Mongol territory, and in Saram in Buryatia.[12]

The graves of ordinary nomads are much simpler and poorer in implements. These are usually roundish or quadrangular stone mounds of 5-10 m. in diameter. The depth of the grave pit is generally not more than 3 m. At the bottom of the pit, there is a wooden coffin (more rarely, a coffin within a chest). The burial place is accompanied with separate pieces of armament, harness, implements, adornments and funeral food.[13] But if we compare the burial sites of common nomads with the graves of the settled population who resided on the Ivolga territory, the latter appear to be even simpler and poorer (Davydova 1995).

How strict was this social pyramid? Was it possible for an individual to overcome the hierarchical stages and to raise his administrative and social status? According to social anthropological studies of Eurasian peoples, the so called patrilineal descent system is characteristic of pastoral nomads.[14] Applied to the problem of vertical mobility, this implies that: 1) status and power, as a rule, are transferred within one descent group in accordance with the seniority principle; 2) no individual can live beyond the framework of a clan-tribal group; and 3) the social status of a particular individual quite often depends on the status of his descent group among other similar groups. Hence, the opportunities of vertical mobility are restricted by the place in the social genealogy of one or another clan subdivision. In such context, the most realistic ways to increase personal status – within limits – is devotion to the ruler and personal military valor.

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[12] Desroches 2003; Miniaev, Sakharovskaia 2006, 2007; Polosmak et al. 2008.

[13] Doržsuren 1961; Konovalov 1976; Ceveendorž 1985; Törbet 2004.

[14] Bacon 1958; Krader 1963; Markov 1976; Khazanov 1984; Masanov 1995.

Archaeological Data

More detailed information about the social structure can be collected from the analysis of burials. Burial rites can be a reliable source of evidence concerning social differentiation in a given society. One should, however, assess the buried persons' sex and age before evaluating their social rank. One reason is that the social status of males and females may have been unequal, and that, if so, this must have been reflected by the burial rite. The second reason is that in such archaic society, rise in social status was only possible after the initiation rite had been performed (Bunyatian 1985; Kradin, Tiskin, and Harinsky 2005).

The analysis of burials includes several successive operations:

1. listing the features of the funerary rite, and feeding the database information (the software used was STATISTICS 5.0);
2. revealing factors correlated with age in the skeletal sample under analysis;
3. separating adult skeletons from those of immature individuals;
4. revealing factors relevant to sex differentiation of adult burials;
5. separating the burials of males from those of females;
6. analyzing differences in the funerary rite within groups homogeneous with regard to age and sex, and attributing indeterminate burials;
7. revealing significant factors linking clusters within sex and age groups with various categories of burial goods;
8. interpreting findings.

To reveal features correlated with sex, age and social status, *factor* analysis was used with a view to discovering latent factors. To discover social groups within homogeneous sex and age cohorts, *cluster* analysis was used, and the number of clusters was estimated *a posteriori*.

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The skeletal series selected for the analysis come from the burial grounds that had been subjected to the most detailed archaeological analysis: Il'movaya Pad', Čeremuhovaya Pad', Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk, and Ivolga cemetery (the total number of graves was 426).

The analysis of Xiongnu burials in the Trans-Baikal region revealed a complex social hierarchy within various sex, age, and ethno-cultural groups.[15]

Male burials fall into several groups differing sharply in terms of social rank (Table 1); these can be arranged into a hierarchy. The top-ranking group comprises burials in three mounds (10, 40, and 54) at Il'movaya Pad'. They can be considered elite or even royal burials (cluster 2). The second highest group is composed of burials in the same group of mounds, accompanied by a variety of funerary goods (subclusters 1A and I B), which display certain differences (burials in the former subcluster appear to be somewhat richer). Next to them in terms of funerary rite and the amount of burial goods are burials at Čeremuhovaya Pad' and Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk. Within the latter burial ground, three groups that were nearly equal in social rank can be separated. Those people were apparently Xiongnu freemen.

Ground burials excavated at Ivolga fall into four social categories. The lowest one includes burials without accompanying goods (cluster 1). The remaining three groups are marked by the presence of burial goods. The second one (subcluster 2AB) differs from the first one (2AA) by the presence of a belt, and the third one (2B) differs from it by the presence of a horse harness.

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[15] See Kradin, Danilov and Konovalov 2004 for more information.

Table 1. Male Xiongnu burials in the Trans-Baikal region

Burial Ground	Cluster	Burial goods
Ivolga	1	None
	2AA	Standard
	2AB	Same + belt
	2B	Same + horse harness
Dyrestuisky Kultuk	1B	Diverse
	1A	More diverse
	2	Same + ornaments
Čeremuhovaya Pad'	1	No differentiation revealed
	2	Same
Il'movaya Pad'	1B	Diverse
	1A	Even more diverse + mirrors + golden ornaments
	2	Elite burial mounds (10, 40, 54)

Generally, differences between the subclusters can be expected to reflect those between social groups of the Xiongnu society. It is therefore tempting to relate these clusters to specific social groups known from the chronicles. This, however, would be premature. One must keep in mind that archaeology deals with fragmentary remains of an extinct culture. Also, our samples are quite small, and every new fieldwork season can introduce substantial corrections to our knowledge of the past. Evidently, relating clusters of burials to specific groups of the Xiongnu society would only be possible after the database has been substantially enlarged.

Another fact relevant for interpreting the results of the statistical analysis of male burials is that the nomadic herdsmen of the western Trans-Baikal region apparently constituted an independent administrative and territorial part of the Xiongnu hierarchy, headed by a top-ranking military chief. If so, then the elite burials at Il'movaya Pad', Örgöntoi, Caram, and Hühünder could have been those of top regional chiefs and their closest kin.

At any rate, the elite burial mounds contrast sharply with graves of lower ranking nomads. The funerary rite and the

funerary goods vary both between the burial grounds and between separate groups (subclusters) of graves within particular burial grounds. Differences between groups of mounds may be explained either by the social status of tribes or clans with which they were associated or by ethnic (tribal) factors or, if they date from different periods, by the evolution of Xiongnu society.

The amount of labor invested in the construction of mounds at Il'movaya Pad', Čeremuhovaya Pad' and Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk is generally larger than that involved in making ground burials such as those for the settled populations at Ivolga. Apparently, the status of the nomads was markedly higher than that of the sedentary villagers who practiced agriculture.

Female burials, too, reveal a certain hierarchy (Table 2). Nearly half of the clusters or subclusters contain weapons. This confirms the previously known evidence of written and archaeological sources to the effect that nomadic women actively participated in warfare.[16]

Female burials of the highest-ranking burial ground, Il'movaya Pad', fall into three groups differing in social status: subcluster 1A (r i c h burials), cluster 2 (intermediate ones), and subcluster 1B (burials of the lowest-ranking women). In Čeremuhovaya Pad' burials of women, unlike those of men, fall into two groups differing in status.

Women's graves at Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk can be subdivided into three groups. The first one (subcluster 1B) is characterized by standard burial goods typical of common burials. Two other clusters, 1A and 2, while both showing higher status than 1B, reveal certain differences: the distinctive feature of subcluster 1A is a larger number and greater variety of ornaments, whereas burials in cluster 2 contain weapons.

A much more complex hierarchy is revealed by female burials at Ivolga, where five groups of burials differing in status have been established. Graves of the first group (1 B) contained no goods whatever, and those of the

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[16] Hazanov 1975: 85-6; Bunyatian 1985: 71; Polosmak 1997: 42.

second group (1AA) contained only pottery, while those of the third group (1AB) are characterized by other funerary items as well (Table 2). Female Xiongnu burials in the Trans-Baikal region of the fourth group (2A) show a greater diversity of articles such as a belt, coins, ornaments of various types; in the fifth group (2B) such articles occur on a mass scale, and remains of a funerary repast were found.

Table 2. Female Xiongnu burials in the Trans-Baikal region

Burial ground	Cluster	Burial goods
Ivolga	1B	None
	1AA	Ceramics
	1AB	Standard + ceramics
	2A	More diverse (horse harness, coins, ornaments)
	2B	Even more diverse, remains of funerary repast
Dyrestuisky Kultuk	1B	Diverse, remains of funerary repast
	2	Diverse, remains of funerary repast + cow bones, weapons
	1A	Cow bones
Čeremuhovaya Pad'	2	More diverse
	1	Diverse
Il'movaya Pad'	1B	Scarce
	2	Diverse
	1A	Even more diverse + mirrors + golden ornaments

Children's graves, too, show marked differences depending on whether they were found in groups of mounds (Il'movaya Pad', Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk) or in ground burials (Ivolga). Social stratification is the most evident at Ivolga, where three groups of children's burials were established; those without burial goods (subcluster 2AAB), those with ceramics (subcluster 2AAA), and those containing various articles (subcluster 2AB). Burials in vessels (cluster 1) must be regarded

as a special case (they have tentatively been described as burials of infants).

The comparison of clusters reveals that children's burials fall into two groups in terms of the variety of burial goods: (1) those without any goods and 'poor' ones (cluster 1 and subclusters 2AAA, 2AAB, and 2B of Ivolga); (2) burials at Dyrestuisky Kul'tuk and Il'movaya Pad', as well as those in cluster 2AB at Ivolga. Overall, this provides a basis for separating 'rich' and 'poor' burials of children.

Table 3. Burials of Xiongnu Children in the Trans-Baikal region

Burial ground	Cluster	Burial goods
Ivolga	1	Burials in a vessel
	2AAB	None
	2AAA	Ceramics
	2AB	Standard + ceramics
Dyrestuisky Kultuk	1A 2	Standard (girls?) Standard (boys?)
Il'movaya Pad'		No differentiation revealed

The comparison of these findings with the evidence of written sources demonstrates a complex stratified nature of Xiongnu society. According to narratives, at the top of the social pyramid was the *chanyu* with his closest relatives – members of the Luandi clan. The next highest level was occupied by members of other aristocratic clans, tribal chiefs, and non-aristocratic elite. Below them was the most numerous social stratum: herdsmen, common members of the nomadic society. The bottom of the hierarchy was represented by rightless persons such as disfranchised nomads, tribute-paying captives, or members of semi-vassal sedentary populations such as farmers or craftsmen (Kradin 2002 etc.).

Another important fact is that the Trans-Baikal region was the northernmost outpost of the Xiongnu Empire. People inhabiting it belonged to one or several peripheral tribal

groups that, in administrative and military terms, were distinct parts of the imperial confederation. In Mongolia, far richer graves of the Xiongnu elite are known, apparently associated with members of the Golden Clan (*Luandi*) rather than with provincial chiefs. Clearly, Xiongnu settlements in Mongolia, too, had a somewhat different function. The difference is evidenced by several features, one being the absence of tiles on Buryatian sites. It is quite possible that analysis of Xiongnu burials in Mongolia would reveal a somewhat different number of social strata, whose proportions, too, would differ. All these aspects, however, as well as the chronology and local variants of the Xiongnu culture, will be addressed in future studies that will be based on all the available information concerning the excavated Xiongnu burials in Russia, Mongolia, and China.

Evolution of the Xiongnu Political System

The eminent Chinese historian Sima Qian has given a detailed description of the administrative system of the Xiongnu empire.[17] The empire under Mode/Maodun was divided into three parts: centre, left and right wings. The wings, in turn, were divided into sub-wings. Theoretically, at least, supreme power was held in the hands of the *chanyu*, while he was concurrently also directly in charge of the central tribes of the metropolis of the steppe empire. Twenty-four of the highest officials were in charge of large tribal associations, while at the same time, as holders of the military rank of 'chief of a ten thousand' were subordinate to the *chanyu*. The *chanyu*'s elder brother – successor to the throne – was in charge of the left wing. The nearest relatives of the steppe empire's ruler were his co-ruler, leader and co-ruler of the right wing. Only they had the highest titles of 'kings' (*wang* in Chinese). These kings and six of the most noble of the 'chiefs of a ten thousand' were considered as 'strong' and were in command of not less than ten thousand riders. The rest of the 'chiefs of a ten thousand' actually commanded less than ten thousand cavalrymen (Bunyatian 1985; Kradin, Tiskin, and Harinsky 2005).

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[17] Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 17; see also Groot 1921: 55; Watson 1961: 163-4; Taskin 1968: 40.

At the lowest level of the administrative hierarchy were the local tribal chiefs and elders. Although they were officially subordinate to the 24 deputies from the centre, the dependence of tribal leaders was limited. The *chanyu*'s headquarters was far away and local chiefs enjoyed support from related tribal groups. Thus, the influence of the imperial deputies on local authorities was relatively limited and they were forced to take into account the interests of the tribes subordinate to them. The total number of these tribal groups within the Xiongnu imperial confederation is unknown.

The use made by Chinese historians of military terms – such as 'chiefs of a ten thousand,' 'chiefs of a thousand,' 'chiefs of a ten hundred' – as well as of traditional terms – such as 'kings' (*wang*), 'princes' of different ranks, 'chief commandants,' 'household administrators,' officials etc. – gives grounds to propose that the military and civil hierarchies existed in parallel. Each of these two systems had different functions. The system of non-decimal ranks was used during wars when a great quantity of warriors from different parts of the steppe joined to form one or several armies (Barfield 1992: 38).

At the local level, the power of the *chanyu*, of the highest commanders and of the tribal chiefs operated in a strict but simple and traditional way. On the whole, according to the Chinese chronicles' descriptions of Xiongnu laws, punishment was 'simple and easily realizable' (*Shiji* 110), consisting mainly of stick strokes, exile and the death penalty. It provided an opportunity quickly to resolve conflict at different levels of the hierarchical pyramid and to maintain the stability of the political system as a whole. It is no mere chance that for the Chinese, accustomed from childhood to an unwieldy and clumsy bureaucratic machine, the management system of the Xiongnu confederation seemed extremely simple: 'the management of the whole state is similar to that of one's body' (Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 17).

The well-organized system of ranks developed under Mode/Maodun could not be maintained in later times. This is related to the fact that, owing to the traditional – for the nomadic aristocracy – practice of polygamy, the reproduction of the elite in the nomadic empires occurred in almost geometric series. It is

clear that, as a rule, the senior wife's sons benefited from the succession of status and major property, while all other heirs received only a quite high status. This did not, however, exclude these secondary heirs from taking a place in the official hierarchy. Furthermore, privilege was often accorded favorites or children born of young beloved wives. As for the *chanyu*'s numerous near and distant relatives, the blue 'royal' blood flowed in their veins and all of the members of the Luandi kin, without exception, had the right to lay claim to a place under the sun in the Xiongnu social hierarchy.

Several periods of active introduction of new titles can be identified (Kradin 2002: 216-24). The reason for this became clear in the period from approximately 100-50 BC, with the appearance of an excessive surplus of members of the Xiongnu elite. Though new titles began to be added at this time, all the members of noble clans still could not obtain a place in the political hierarchy corresponding to their birth, leading to an intense competition for possession of status and respective material benefits. In the end, this resulted in a temporary collapse of Xiongnu power into several factions hostile to each other, leading to the civil war of 58-36 BC.

This was followed, in the last third of the first century BC, by a second mass introduction of new titles and posts. The new combination of political forces formed after the civil war gradually rigidified, resulting in a strong hierarchy. The state's new foreign policy now required a correction of the administrative system; some old titles proved somewhat compromised, having previously been held by enemies or traitors. It was now necessary firmly to establish a new principle for the inheritance of power, to develop principles for making political decisions, and to introduce new posts and appropriate splendid titles. In the end, however, the increasing number of the nomadic elite's representatives resulted in a resumption of struggles for limited resources. In AD 48, the steppe empire collapsed into northern and southern confederations; the third and last large-scale appearance of new titles came in this time of the division of Xiongnu power into groupings at odds with each other.

The Chinese historian Fan Ye, author of the *Hou Han shu*, gave the same detailed description of the Xiongnu political system in the first century AD as his eminent predecessor Sima Qian had centuries before (Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 680; Taskin 1973: 73). This provides a unique opportunity to observe the dynamics of the Xiongnu political institutions throughout 250 years. The most considerable differences between the power of the Mode/Maodun epoch and Xiongnu society before it collapsed are as follows:

1. There has been a transition, from the triadic military-administrative division to dual tribal division into wings.
2. Sima Qian wrote clearly about the development of the military-administrative structure with 'chiefs of a ten thousand.' Fan Ye does not mention a decimal system; instead military rank of 'chiefs of a ten thousand' are enumerated as civil titles of 'king' (*wang*).
3. According to Fan Ye, the whole first ten of 'strong' 'chiefs of a ten thousand' had, from the viewpoint of the Chinese chronicles, a more independent position from the *chanyu* headquarters.
4. The order of succession to the throne had changed. While the *chanyu*'s throne had ordinarily passed from father to son (with a few extraordinary exceptions), the order from uncle to nephew had now become predominant.
5. The Xiongnu state came to adopt a prevailing principle of joint government, according to which the ruler of the nomadic empire had a co-ruler, who controlled one of the polity's wings. The capacity of become a junior co-ruler was held by birth; but a co-ruler's successors could not pretend to the *chanyu*'s throne.

These changes demonstrate a gradual weakening of the autocratic power of the center, and development of more diffused authority and federative relations, as demonstrated by, among

other things, the transition from triadic administrative-territorial division to a dual one. The military-hierarchical relations were pressed back and the genealogical hierarchy between senior and junior by rank tribes was pushed into the foreground.

The Social and Political Organization of the Xianbei

Unfortunately, there is little information in the Chinese chronicles about the Xianbei family, marriage, social organization or political systems. It is only known that, among the Xianbei, there was a custom to hold marriages at the traditional national spring festival (*HHS* 90.8a). We can, however, compare the Xianbei with the Wuhuan, their contemporaneous neighbors. The Chinese chronicles attribute the Wuhuan and the Xianbei to a common cultural sphere – that of the proto-Mongolian Donghu – and inform us that the Xianbei customs and language were similar to those of the Wuhuan (Taskin 1984: 7, 329). Therefore, based on our knowledge of the Wuhuan, one can assume that the Xianbei had the following forms of social organization:

1. lowest levels: Family (most likely, nuclear or restricted family) and kinship groups related by real blood relationship, ownership of livestock and commonness of economic interests. The Chinese chroniclers used the term *luo* (household) to describe this level of the nomads' social organization.

2. medium levels: Lineages and clans (Chinese *yiluo*). These levels were based on remote real as well as fictitious kinship, periodic economic relations, cultural, political and ideological networks.

3. highest levels: *Bu* (group of nomadic households according to Chinese historians), the 'tribe' in anthropological terms. The tribes of nomads were mainly based on political, economic, cultural, ideological and other non-economic relations and were veiled in the form of fictitious genealogical kinship.

The use of the term 'tribe' in anthropology is subject to many discussions.[18] After Morton Fried's book (1975), the term 'tribe' was excluded from the series of mandatory forms of cultural integration (band – community – chiefdom – early state – national state). Actually, tribes only appeared as a response to external influences from more developed societies. However, to interpret the social organization of pastoral nomads, the notions of community and chiefdom are useless. It would hold for both ancient Xianbei and later medieval Mongols. *Uruq, irgen, oboq,* are something more than community but can not be interpreted as chiefdom. For this reason, I think that, to describe the Xianbei community (it would hold for all nomads), it is expedient to use the notion of tribe as structurally opposed to that of chiefdom. A tribe is an aggregate of second level segments, a sum of *yiluo*. A chiefdom could also be a sum of *yiluo*. However, while a tribe has no hierarchical organization of power, a chiefdom is a stratified community with a political hierarchy. In other words, the relationship between the notions of tribe and chiefdom as applied to pastoral nomads is similar to that between the communal-nomadic and military-nomadic aggregative situations of nomadic societies (Markov 1978; König 1981). It is also necessary to recognize the tribe as an acephalic structure that has no fixed boundaries and general tribal government, as stated for the Nuer by Evans-Pritchard. Ernest Gellner identified for Near Eastern nomads these two phenomena as *primitive* and *marginal* tribalism (1969: 2-3).

The main functions of the Xianbei *bu* (i.e. tribes or chiefdoms, as the case may be) and their authorities were as follows:

1. Establishment of boundaries between the territories of tribes. This can be confirmed by reference to the sources. In the *Sanguo zhi*, it is reported that, in the 220s, the Xianbei chiefs Kebineng, Mixia, and Suli concluded a frontier agreement between tribal

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[18] In connection with the 'tribe,' see also the comments of David Sneath in his chapter in this volume.

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territories, in which 'there was a separating boundary for each of them' (Taskin 1984: 325-6).

2. Defense against external dangers (other Xianbei tribes, other nomadic peoples, Chinese armies) and, on the other hand, organization of raids on neighbors. The sources abound with reports of attacks on the border areas of China (I will return to this point below). There is a lot of data about internal conflicts between Xianbei tribes, such as seizure of livestock and other plunder (*baranta*). Suffice it to mention the conditions of Tanshihuai's rising: Tanshihuai (fl. late second century), the first great leader of the Xianbei, gained authority over his fellow tribesmen in taking by force the livestock of the leader of the neighboring nomadic society Tanshihuai's grand-parents' herds (Taskin 1984: 330).

3. Resolution of internal conflicts concerning border violations, stealing and theft of livestock etc., between separate tribal segments structurally opposed to each other.

4. Possibly, the organization of some tribal festivals and carrying out of cults and rituals for the tribe as a whole. Xianbei assemblies are mentioned in the chronicles (*HHS* 90.8a). Taskin (1984: 24) likens them, quite rightly, to Mongolian *quriltai*; hence, one can assume that similar traditions were also maintained at the lower tribal level;

5. Episodic economic activity in the form of battues. Although there are no mentions of Xianbei battues in the sources, this form of hunting was widespread among many nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppes and, in particular, among the Shiwei and Khitan, who were ethnically related to the Xianbei.

The demography of the tribes was unequal. Thus, we have mentions of *bu* with five thousand people, several tens of thousands of people, five thousand 'households' (about 25 thousand people), ten thousand soldiers and ten thousand tents

(up to fifty thousand people); the largest had some twenty thousand 'households' (some one hundred thousand people).

The chiefs of *bu,* tribes or simple chiefdoms, fulfilled the following functions:

1. Military: organization of the battle-worthy portion of the population for raiding, and to repulse neighboring tribes' raids (see, for example: Taskin 1984: 76, 80, 325). It is not accidental that 'boldest' occupied the first place among the important qualities ascribed to the most outstanding Xianbei chiefs, such as Tanshihuai or Kebineng (fl. early third century) (Taskin 1984: 75, 324, 330). One can remember that the rise of Tanshihuai began after he had dispersed the robbers attacking his nomadic camp.

2. Redistributive: distribution of the booty taken during raids (mainly, on China) (Taskin 1984: 80, 324-325). In the sources, there is no information about the re-distribution of internal resources.

3. Judicial: resolution of disputes concerning the territories where nomads live, stealing of livestock, violation of customs, mutilation, murders etc. When Tanshihuai came to power he laid out 'law rules for disposition of cases between innocent and guilty and nobody dared to break them' (Taskin 1984: 75, 330). The same duties are also mentioned with respect to his son, Helian (Taskin 1984: 80). One of the reasons give for Kebineng's election as a chief was his equitable investigation of lawsuits (Taskin 1984: 324). However, it is unlikely that these actions were based on written law.

4. Foreign trade: control of the foreign trade with China and other peoples and countries (Taskin 1984: 325-326).

It is possible that the chief should also perform other functions. At the same time, the most important affairs were most likely examined at the great assembly of chiefs, to which a

number of sources give passing mention (Taskin 1984: 70, 85, 329).

As a rule, the rulers' well-being depended on the prosperity of their nomad subjects. This idea, repeatedly emphasized by researchers of the steppe world, is well confirmed by written and ethnographic sources. The chroniclers connect the successful character of the Tanshihuai and Kebineng regimes with the fact that they were fair and lavish rulers (Taskin 1984: 75, 324): 'All of the riches seized in the course of raids were fairly divided by Kebineng: he decided all right away and took nothing for his own; therefore, the people served him with all their forces and the elders of other nomadic groups had respect for him and were afraid of him' (Taskin 1984: 325). The political failures of Helian, son of Tanshihuai, on the other hand, are explained by his excessive greed and unfairness with respect to his subjects: the sources report that because of Helian's greed and debauchery, as well as unfair judgments on emerging disputes, half of his people arose in rebellion against him (Taskin 1984: 80).

As to the inheritance of power, one can say only a few words. First, it is not clear whether the titles of chieftains were handed down by the time when Tanshihuai came to power, or the chiefs were elected at the general meeting. Tanshihuai himself was elected chief of his *bu* for his personal services. He was a courageous warrior and resolved justly the conflicts between herders. However, he became the leader of a confederation of tribes and chieftainships because other chiefs had submitted to his force (*HHS* 90.14a). In this case, we have two different ways of gaining power: elections and usurpation (or for some, both at the same time). But afterwards, the position of the confederation's main leader started to be handed down. Helian, son of Tanshihuai, too, became a leader of confederation. Here, we see a transfer of power from father to son. Following this, however, it was Helian's younger brother, Buduhen, who received the chief's title, because Helian's son was too young.

It is known from *Hou Han shu* (*HHS* 90.8a) that the Xianbei held a 'great meeting' (*da hui*) in spring. Later on, this notion designated a *quriltai* of Mongols in the Chinese sources. It is possible that these meetings were similar to those held by the

Xiongnu at the end of the spring (the Xiongnu chiefs met three times a year: at the beginning of the year, in spring and in September). We can assume that the legitimation of the confederation's leader was realized at a great meeting.[19]

The main difference between the Xianbei and the Xiongnu is the existence of a high vertical mobility among the Xianbei. Among the Xiongnu, the top positions were mainly taken up by representatives of the Luandi ruling family. Tanshihuai, on the other hand, was the illegitimate son of an ordinary warrior recruited into the Xiongnu army. According to Chinese historical sources, Kebineng had his origin in an 'insignificant' family of the Xianbei. Nevertheless, in spite of this, both became charismatic leaders.

The Xianbei confederation consisted of different peoples. As early as AD 91, no less than one hundred thousand Xiongnu tents joined the Xianbei confederation.[20] Very likely, other peoples were also included in the tribal confederation, forming primarily the right (western) wing.

The greater part of the ethnically Xianbei tribes was concentrated in the central and eastern areas of the steppe empire. This can be confirmed by the fact that the regions of eastern Mongolia and eastern Baikal (of the 'left wing') were areas of traditional residence of the Xianbei. It is precisely there that archaeological sites of their culture have been found. A part of the right wing separated off from the confederation, but only the names of the chiefs listed among the left wing are mentioned in the sources. It is interesting that, later on, the eastern wing was governed by the Yuwen family (clan), which was of Xiongnu origin (WS 103.22a; Taskin 1984: 45, 51-2).

At the time of Tanshihuai, the strength of the Xianbei army reached one hundred thousand horsemen (Taskin 1984: 78). If one considers that all men were potentially warriors, and that ..!ult male population should amount to about 1/5 of the total

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[19] *Shiji* 110 mentions the Xiongnu meetings. This source, however, mentions only that these meetings were organized for counting cattle and are silent about the choice or approval of a leader. Note of the editors.

[20] *HHS* 90.9b; Zhongyang minzu xueyuan yanjiubu 1958: 694; Taskin 1973: 84 note 26.

population, one can assume that the total population was about half a million. On the basis of the number of tribes, Taskin has come to similar conclusions about the Xianbei population (1984: 44-5). The total number of *bu* was more than fifty. Each of them counted approximately ten thousand people and, therefore, two thousand fighting men.

After the death of Tanshihuai in AD 181, the Xianbei confederation rapidly decayed. A generation later, however, according to Chinese sources, Kebineng managed to restore the military potential of the Xianbei. The strength of his army once again reached one hundred thousand horsemen (Taskin 1984: 325). However, we should remember that the right wing did not belong to his confederation. Furthermore, the author of the *Sanguo zhi*, Chen Shou, wrote that Kebineng's military might could not be compared with Tanshihuai (Taskin 1984: 325). Therefore, one can also assume that the figure 'one hundred thousand' is a rough notation for 'very many.' It is unlikely that the Chinese could have a precise information about the number of nomads who permanently traveled 'in search of grass and water' through pastures. In any event, the military power of the Xianbei was inferior to that of the Xiongnu nomadic empire, which had had three hundred thousand soldiers, i.e. three times 'very many.'

The Xianbei had a triadic administrative system – a center and two wings. As we have seen above, such a system had been characteristic of the early Xiongnu. It was also found among the Scythians, among the Tuoba, at some periods of the Second Turk Khaganate, in the early Mongol empire, and among the Kalmyks. There are several viewpoints with respect to dual and triadic organizations.[21] Possibly, the primary factor was the ruler's wish to increase his personal power, the triadic system fostering this better than the dual one. As we have seen, the most powerful of the lords of the Xianbei confederation, Tanshihuai, divided his power into three parts, and after doing so established a headquarters (*ting*) similar to that of the Xiongnu *chanyu*. This was located on the shore of the Čoču River at 300 and more *li*

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[21] Herodotus, IV.7; Bičurin 1950 [1851]: 169; Schorkowitz, 1992: 56-8; Trepavlov 1993: 138.

(i.e. more than 120 kilometers, if the *li* is equivalent to 400 meters) to the north of Gaoli, i.e. the early Korean state Koguryŏ (*HHS* 90.14a). If the Chinese author is not mistaken, then the headquarters should be located on the Manchuria territory. In connection with this, there are two questions to which I have no answer. The first one is how to rule over such a great territory, which is said to have extended more than 14,000 *li* (over 5000 km) from east to west and more than 7,000 *li* (almost 3000 km) north to south (*HHS* 90.14a-14b)? In the absence of developed means of communication, it seems practically impossible to rule over such a large country. The second question is: what part of the empire did Tanshihuai control himself when, to follow the chronicles, his headquarters was located in the left wing territory? The region of the left wing, it will be remembered, would later come under control of the Yuwen, who were of Xiongnu origin. These questions should be examined in more detail. If Tanshihuai liked a locality near the Čoču River in the Tanhan mountains (Shiratori [1935: 51-2] believes this to be the Baishan mountain near the border between China and Korea), then it could be one of his seasonal headquarters. Being a nomad, he traveled several times a year.

In addition to nomads, the power of the Xianbei lords extended also over settled populations. If pastoral nomads themselves disdained sedentarization, they solved the problem of shortage of agricultural products by seizing people from settled states (Taskin 1984: 76, 80, 324), resettling them on lands they controlled and forcing them to cultivate the land. They may have also forced them to bring tribute. Craftsmen were also captured, and we can assume that both farmers and craftsmen inhabited such settlements. Cases of Chinese immigrants to the Xianbei are also known. It is thanks to these that, at the time of Kebineng, the Xianbei rejected smuggled iron weapons from China (Taskin 1984: 78), and instead began to produce their own metal arms (Taskin 1984: 324).

Nevertheless, all this gives the impression that settlements of farmers established by nomads were few. Interestingly, the Chinese chronicles record how anxious Tanshihuai was about the nomadic population growth. In order to extend the resource base, he ordered the resettling of about 1000

families of *woren* fishermen (Han according to another source) in an area near the Wuhoujin River (today's Laohahe River) so as to supply fish for nomads (Taskin 1984: 80, 331). This is all the more interesting, since it is traditionally assumed that nomads do not eat fish. But this may result from an influence of religion. Prior to the introduction of Buddhism, the situation was somewhat different. Five years ago, I started to study the Khitan town of Čintolgoi in Mongolia, where I found traces of Bohai peoples who were also resettled in central Mongolia to provide nomads with foodstuffs. We found many bones of pigs and scales of different species of fish (Kradin et al. 2005).

Some Conclusions

How were the nomads able to establish the steppe imperial confederations? And were these 'empires' states? These are key questions of the political anthropology of pastoral nomads.

There are two different approaches to explain the reasons for formation of the nomadic empires. In this connection, the standpoint of Owen Lattimore and his followers according to which nomadism depends on the natural environment and adjacent agricultural-urban communities enjoys wide popularity.[22] The nomads are in need of agricultural and handicraft products and, in order to get them, attack their settled neighbors or exchange deficient products through trade. The second approach holds that nomads had independent economies and that the formation of steppe polities is the result of autonomous evolution of pastoral tribes and peoples.[23]

Perhaps one of the most charming conceptions concerning the periodization of the Inner Asia steppe comes from Thomas Barfield's pen. In his opinion, one can establish a synchronism in development and decay of nomadic empires and similar cycles in China. Such a cyclic structure of political ties between the peoples of China, Inner Asia and other East Asian polities have, in Barfield's opinion, been three times repeated over a period of two thousands years: from the Xiongnu to the Rouran, from the Turks to the fall of the Yuan dynasty, and from the Ming to the

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[22] Lattimore 1940; Khazanov 1984; Barfield 1992; Kradin 1992.
[23] Markov 1976; Krader 1978; Di Cosmo 2002.

revolution of 1911, which has interrupted this circular evolution (Barfield 1992: 8-16).

Nicola Di Cosmo believes that, based on the limited nature of nomad economies, the conception of the origin of steppe empires was at first erroneous, because the nomads were acquainted with agriculture (Di Cosmo 1999: 12 note 38). The conceptions of both Barfield and Di Cosmo supplement each other. Barfield showed well a correlation between the growth and collapse of the Chinese dynasties and early empires of nomads from Xiongnu to Uighurs. One can dispute the specific years when the Han dynasty and Xiongnu power have appeared and Barfield has been rightly criticized with respect to historical details. Nevertheless, when a schedule of the demographic cycle of the China dynasties is compared with the life of steppe empires, they nearly coincide (Korytayev, Malkov, and Khaltourina 2006: 47-53). However, this model is inapplicable to Mongolian history, as the formation of Chinggis Khan's empire coincided with the crisis years of the Jurchen state system rather than its rise. Having united all the Mongols in 1206, Chinggis Khan just four years later began to wage war against the Jin dynasty. Di Cosmo's conception of the origin of the steppe empire, developed out of study of the Xiongnu, is more heuristic for the interpretation of the history of medieval Mongols (Di Cosmo 1999: 15-26; *idem* 2002: 167-86).

The prerequisite for the establishment of steppe empire has, instead, been a structural crisis within the nomad community. The crisis is paramount, as the anonymous creator of the §254 of *Secret History* describes it (Rachewiltz 2004: 183):

> The starry sky was turning upon itself. The many people were in turmoil: They did not enter their beds *to rest,* but fought against each other. The crusty earth was turning and turning, the entire nation was in turmoil. They did not lie on their coverlets *to rest,* but attacked each other.

The first step to overcome such a crisis is militarization. And a consequence of such militarization is establishment of a military-hierarchical structure within the steppe community. Having been proclaimed khan, Chinggis Khan formally

organized his guard units (*keshig*), introducing the decimal system. Such militarization ran parallel with appearance of a charismatic leader and his sacral legitimation as ruler. All of this resulted in concentration of power in his person; expansion, organization and acquisition of incomes then laid down the conditions for establishment of a state. The Xiongnu and the Xianbei fit classically into the first and most widespread model, characterized by the rise of a talented leader able to consolidate all tribes into a united steppe confederation. Such talented political and military leaders were Mode/Maodun and Tanshihuai, who would come to represent the road to power in folklore. The Xiongnu and Xianbei tribal confederations are *typical* nomadic empires (Kradin 1992: 166-78; *idem* 2003: 78-80). They looked like autocratic states from the outside but were consultative and tribal inside. The stability of steppe empires depended directly on the skill of the supreme power at organizing the extraction from settled territories of silk, agricultural products, handicrafts and luxury items, and then redistribution of such goods to his following.

One can identify the following features as signs of ancient nomadic empires: 1) multistage hierarchical character of the organization of society crossed at all levels by tribal and super-tribal genealogical ties; 2) a dualistic (two wings) or triadic (center and wings) principle of administrative division of the empire; and 3) military-hierarchical character of social organization. These features are characteristic also of other ancient empires of Eurasia: those of the Scythians and the Huns.

These two Inner Asian empires differed in the following respects: 1) the Xiongnu applied the decimal principle; 2) for the Xiongnu, the empire was the property of the whole imperial clan, as seen in the Xiongnu institution of co-government, while the Xianbei valued only personal charismatic leadership; and 3) as to relations with China, the Xianbei pursued a strategy of raids and plundering, while in the distance frontier strategy of the Xiongnu we see an alternation of raids, tribute and trade.

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Chapter 10

Une « dualité » du pouvoir ?
Empire terrestre et inspiration divine
dans la légende arabe
d'Alexandre et de Khidr

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Dans de multiples cultures et à des époques très différentes, le souvenir d'Alexandre le Grand cristallisa toute une série de questions et de représentations portant sur la conception de la souveraineté[1]. Dans le monde musulman, cette cristallisation ne résulta pas seulement de l'essor de la légende connue sous le nom de « Roman d'Alexandre » qui finit par faire du conquérant le maître de l'empire universel. Elle y revêtit une dimension particulière, comme on le sait, en raison du rapprochement opéré entre cette légende et le récit relatif au « Bicornu » ou « Homme à la double corne » (Dhu l-Qarnayn) qui, dans le Coran (sourate « La caverne », versets 82-99), reçoit de Dieu pouvoir sur la terre entière et l'explore, comme Alexandre, jusqu'à ses extrémités où il rencontre des peuples étranges et érige le mur de Gog et Magog.

Dès lors que la question de l'identification de ces deux figures était posée, et avec elle celle de la nature de l'autorité d'Alexandre et du sens de sa conquête universelle, celui-ci se trouva sans cesse comparé avec ou opposé à de multiples figures de souverains issues de diverses traditions nationales, qu'il s'agisse de rois impies et orgueilleux bien connus des traditions bibliques (Pharaon et Nemrod), arabes (Shaddâd b. ʿAd) et persanes (Kay Kaous), ou au contraire de rois inspirés et guidés par Dieu (principalement Salomon). Ces comparaisons sous-tendaient une vision de l'histoire où, dans la succession des

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[1] Voir par exemple Bridges *et al.* 1996, et Harff-Lancner *et al.* 1999.

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empires, Alexandre assure la transition des dominations universelles impies à la mise en place de l'empire musulman dont sa conquête constitue en quelque sorte le prodrome, la préfiguration[2].

Mais le rapprochement et la comparaison furent effectués aussi avec des personnages de nature non plus royale mais prophétique et eschatologique, principalement Moïse et al-Khidr (ou al-Khadir), le « verdoyant », à la fois saint et sage, détenteur d'un savoir d'origine divine, guide initiatique, à la fois immortel et omniprésent sans être jamais visible pour autant (Elboudrari 1992)[3]. Le nœud de cette rencontre, de cette proximité entre Alexandre, Moïse et Khidr, comme cela est bien connu, est l'épisode de la quête de la source d'immortalité à laquelle Khidr trouve accès tandis qu'Alexandre échoue à la découvrir (Friedlaender 1913). La source d'immortalité ne figure pas dans le premier état connu du « Roman » d'Alexandre, composé en grec à Alexandrie vers le IIIeme siècle après J.-C. et attribué plus tard par des érudits byzantins à Callisthène, neveu d'Aristote qui avait accompagné Alexandre dans ses conquêtes (d'où son nom de « Pseudo-Callisthène »)[4]. Il est en revanche attesté dans les versions byzantines du « Pseudo-Callisthène » où c'est le cuisinier d'Alexandre qui découvre la source. Dans le monde musulman cependant, le récit fondateur de l'élaboration de la figure de Khidr est à nouveau la sourate de « La caverne ». Selon celle-ci, successivement, Moïse (qui joue ici le rôle dévolu à Alexandre dans la légende grecque) et son serviteur arrivent au « confluent des deux mers », où le poisson séché reprend vie (versets 60-65) ; ils comprennent, mais trop tard, qu'il s'agit de la source d'immortalité, veulent y revenir et rencontrent alors un « serviteur de Dieu » – celui que l'exégèse coranique identifie à

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[2] J'ai développé cette analyse dans différentes études ; voir entre autres, Polignac 1999 et 2005. Cette vision s'est diffusée dans toute l'aire d'influence de l'islam, par exemple en Asie centrale : Aubin et Hamayon 2002: 74-7.

[3] *Encyclopédie de l'Islam²*, IV: 935-8, article *al-Khadir* (A. J. Wensinck).

[4] Sur la tradition du « Pseudo-Callisthène », voir : Bounoule et Serret, 1991 ; Jouanno 2002.

Khidr – qui guide Moïse dans une sorte de parcours initiatique, de découverte de la sagesse divine au delà des apparences et de la connaissance superficielle des seules choses visibles (versets 66-82) ; et c'est immédiatement à la suite de ce récit qu'a été placé le récit sur le « Bicornu » et ses exploits aux confins du monde (versets 83-98).

Le « serviteur », détenteur d'une sagesse inspirée qui lui permet de comprendre les desseins cachés de Dieu, est ainsi placé entre deux récits – la quête de la source d'immortalité, la conquête du monde et la construction du mur de Gog et Magog – que les lettrés du monde arabo-musulman ont retrouvés pareillement associés dans les versions byzantines et les traductions syriaques des VIIᵉ-VIIIᵉ siècles de la légende d'Alexandre, auxquelles ils avaient accès et qui furent traduites à leur tour en arabe. La sourate de « La caverne » et sa confrontation avec la légende d'Alexandre ne posent donc pas seulement la question de l'identification éventuelle du « Bicornu » à Alexandre (mais sans oublier que Moïse aussi est un personnage « à la double corne »). L'une et l'autre, dans leur proximité et malgré leur différence de statut, servent de cadre référentiel à un autre débat, qui porte sur la nature de la relation entre les missions et qualités respectives du conquérant qui a reçu de Dieu une tâche universelle de clôture du monde mais qui se voit refuser l'immortalité, et des personnages au rôle plus spécifiquement prophétique (Moïse) ou initiatique (« le serviteur » / Khidr)[5]. Il est évidemment tentant, et pas totalement erroné, de penser cette relation en termes d'opposition binaire entre statut royal et mission prophétique, que l'on pourrait décliner ainsi (v.a. Génequand 1999 : 129-30) :

- pouvoir temporel / autorité spirituelle
- savoir acquis par apprentissage / savoir « reçu » directement de Dieu
- inscription dans le temps historique / statut atemporel, métahistorique (immortalité)
- acquisition de la dimension universelle par inscription dans l'espace de parcours, de lieux, de limites

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[5] Je prolonge ici les réflexions présentées dans Polignac 2000: 82-3.

atteintes / universalité transcendant l'espace par l'ubiquité.

Il ne serait pas difficile d'interpréter certains textes en fonction d'une opposition systématique de ce type ; mais ce serait sans doute une erreur de s'en tenir là et de négliger les traces d'une conception plus nuancée des rapports entre les deux formes d'autorité que le « Bicornu » / Alexandre et Khidr semblent représenter. Il convient de noter en premier lieu que, dans le Coran, Dhu l-Qarnayn semble recevoir une connaissance directe des desseins divins et de la mission qui lui est confiée : Dieu parle, et le héros semble bien recevoir sa parole sans truchement. Le « Bicornu » est donc proche du statut prophétique, même s'il n'est jamais qualifié de prophète. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que plusieurs textes arabes insistent autant sur ce qui rapproche, crée de la connivence entre les deux figures et les deux missions, que sur ce qui les distingue.

Il y a d'abord une tradition bien attestée qui fait d'Alexandre ou « Bi-cornu » et de Khidr des cousins par leurs mères, qui étaient sœurs. Selon le récit le plus circonstancié, celui de Damîrî, le père d'Alexandre « Bi-cornu » était le plus savant astrologue de son temps et attendait l'apparition d'une étoile particulière dans une constellation pour concevoir un fils qui, de cette manière, pourrait vivre jusqu'à la fin des temps ; mais fatigué par ses veilles, il s'était endormi et lorsque l'étoile apparut, sa femme, bien que mise dans le secret, n'osa pas le réveiller. La sœur de cette dernière au contraire, qui avait surpris le secret, se hâta d'aller trouver son mari et conçut un fils qui reçut le don d'immortalité – et ce fut Khidr. Quand l'astrologue se réveilla, il était trop tard ; il attendit alors une autre étoile qui apparut juste après et qui, faute de mieux, permettrait à l'enfant conçu à ce moment de « tenir les deux cornes du soleil », autrement dit (selon une des exégèses du nom de Dhu l-Qarnayn) de parcourir et dominer la terre entière. Ainsi, Khidr et Alexandre « Bicornu » furent conçus la même nuit par deux sœurs, mais ce fut Khidr qui reçut l'immortalité, tandis

qu'Alexandre recevait l'empire universel en guise de compensation, par défaut pourrait-on dire[6].

Sans parler d'une façon de construire un couple de figures apparentées à la fois par le sang et par leur mission qui n'est pas sans rappeler celui constitué par Jean le Baptiste et Jésus dans les Évangiles, on retrouve dans ce récit des thèmes bien connus de la légende grecque d'Alexandre : le thème astrologique dérive directement du Pseudo-Callisthène et de sa mise en scène des manœuvres de Nectanebo, égyptien donc magicien et astrologue, réfugié à la cour de Macédoine, qui séduit la reine Olympias et s'unit à elle sous la forme du dieu Ammon, en une quasi parodie des anciennes conceptions égyptiennes de la conception divine de Pharaon. Quand Olympias s'apprête à mettre au monde l'enfant (Alexandre) qu'elle a conçu de Nectanebo / Ammon, celui-ci la force à se retenir jusqu'au moment où apparaît l'astre qui va donner à l'enfant l'empire universel (Pseudo-Callisthène, I, 4-7.). Mais le renversement qui s'opère entre le récit grec et le récit arabe est évidemment fondamental : ce qui est le but suprême dans le premier, le pouvoir universel qui assure indirectement l'immortalité du nom d'Alexandre, n'est plus que compensation de l'immortalité perdue dans le second, et ce renversement témoigne, avec d'autres épisodes du même genre de la légende arabe (par exemple celui de la fondation d'Alexandrie chez Masᶜudi), du souci de préserver le libre exercice de la volonté divine face au déterminisme de l'astrologie, les calculs humains se fondant sur celle-ci se voyant déjoués par les ruses de Dieu.

Ce qui néanmoins est propre à la légende arabe est l'instauration d'un lien étroit, qui n'est pas de pure opposition mais comporte aussi une part de complémentarité, entre l'idée d'immortalité et l'idée de pouvoir universel, de dépassement du temps et de dépassement de l'espace, à travers les figures d'Alexandre ou du « Bicornu » et de Khidr. D'autres textes explicitent davantage cette articulation, en particulier le long récit consacré à Dhu l-Qarnayn dans le *Livre des couronnes du*

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[6] Jayakar 1906: 48-9. L'idée de cette parenté est déjà présente dans *L'histoire de Dhu l-Qarnayn* attribuée à ᶜUmara b. Wathima (IXe siècle), Friedlaender 1913: 310, l. 2 sq.

Himyar de Ibn Hishâm (IXe siècle). Cet ouvrage d'histoire du Yémen est une défense et illustration des traditions historiques et culturelles sud-arabiques (souvent placées sous l'autorité du grand traditionniste sud-arabe Wahb b. Munabbih) face aux revendications du Hejâz et à l'irruption, dans la culture de la communauté musulmane, des traditions persanes, syriaques, grecques et égyptiennes[7]. Le récit sur le « Bicornu » vise donc à détacher le personnage du souvenir d'Alexandre en l'identifiant à un ancien roi du Yémen, Saab b. al-Harith. Néanmoins, les aventures de Saab sont très largement décalquées du « Roman d'Alexandre » et les catégories de représentation mises en œuvre par le texte sont bien les mêmes que celles que l'on trouve dans les autres récits qui assimilent le « Bicornu » à Alexandre ou du moins laissent cette option ouverte parmi d'autres. L'identification au sens strict est donc secondaire, dès lors que les thèmes essentiels sont identiques.

Le roi Saab est visité par quatre songes qui le plongent dans la perplexité et l'effroi. Dans le premier, il voit quelqu'un le prendre par la main et l'emmener au sommet d'une très haute montagne d'où il voit, d'un côté, un lieu de délices qu'on lui désigne comme le Paradis, de l'autre un lieu de tourments qu'on lui désigne comme l'Enfer. Ce premier récit puise à double source : à un niveau général, il s'inscrit dans la tradition apocalyptique des voyages et ascensions de prophètes (Abraham, Baruch, Hénoch...) qui, guidés par un envoyé céleste, découvrent le Paradis et l'Enfer ; à un niveau plus particulier, il reprend aussi certains traits du songe qui visite Alexandre lors de la fondation d'Alexandrie dans la version grecque primitive du Pseudo-Callisthène (la « recension alpha »), épisode conservé dans la traduction syriaque[8]. Dans ce rêve en effet, Alexandre voit Sarapis, le grand dieu de l'Alexandrie hellénistique et romaine, lui apparaître et l'emmener au sommet d'une montagne

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[7] Nagel 1978; Khoury 1972. Le passage concernant Dhu l-Qarnayn avait été publié par M. Lidzbarski 1893. Une édition complète, avec quelques variantes, est parue à Haïderabad en 1347hg/1928-29.

[8] Tradition apocalyptique: Dupont-Sommer et Philonenko 1987: 1147-64 (III *Baruch*), 1173-99 (II *Hénoch*), 1669-80 (*Testament d'Abraham*), 1712-30 (*Apocalypse d'Abraham*). Songe d'Alexandre: I, 33 dans la version grecque; I, 32 dans la version syriaque.

où il lui promet que son nom restera immortel grâce à la ville qu'il édifie et qui durera à tout jamais. C'est ce récit qui est à l'origine de toute une tradition arabe sur l'ascension d'Alexandre dans les airs, très différente du célèbre voyage aérien dans une nacelle connu des textes et de l'iconographie des mondes byzantins et latins (Polignac 1996).

Le deuxième songe est d'inspiration directement biblique, car Saab voit une échelle qui se dresse et lui permet de monter jusqu'au ciel – l'échelle de Jacob évidemment. Dans le troisième, il se voit en train de dévorer la terre entière. Dans la quatrième vision enfin, à l'instar de Salomon, il soumet à son autorité toutes les forces de la nature, les vents, les démons, les hommes et les animaux.

Anxieux de faire interpréter ses rêves, Saab reçoit conseil d'aller consulter un prophète qui vit à Jérusalem. Lorsqu'il le trouve, le prophète se présente sous le nom de Moïse al-Khidr et salue le roi en l'appelant « Dhu l-Qarnayn » et en lui expliquant qu'il lui donne ce nom parce que Saab est « celui qui tient les deux cornes du soleil ». Il lui révèle ensuite que tous ses rêves annoncent qu'il détiendra l'empire universel, à condition de rester étroitement soumis à la volonté divine, et qu'il atteindra les confins de la terre, en particulier le pays des ténèbres au delà de l'endroit où le soleil se couche : « là tu seras privé de la lumière du soleil et seule ta sagesse t'aidera à en ressortir, sois donc attentif aux volontés divines car Dieu pourra te voir, te guider et te donner le succès » (Lidzbarski 1893: 284-6.).

Une nouvelle vision que Saab reçoit ensuite est interprétée par Khidr comme un ordre divin de se mettre en marche vers le couchant. La suite du texte décrit le parcours conquérant de Saab, en compagnie de Khidr, parcours émaillé d'épisodes connus de la légende d'Alexandre (le fleuve de sable, le pays des ténèbres, la vallée des diamants). Tout au long de ce premier parcours, la relation entre le « Bicornu » et Khidr obéit au schéma mis en place au départ : Moïse / Khidr joue le rôle d'exégète de la volonté divine pour le roi qui reçoit des songes. Mais cette relation, il est important de le souligner, n'est pas simplement celle du sage à l'ignorant, d'un guide à un disciple totalement aveugle qui ne peut accéder au savoir que par l'intermédiaire du maître. Il y a en effet une répartition des

envois de messages divins, mise en lumière par les termes employés : Saab est visité par des *asbâb*, au singulier *sabab*, qui est le terme même employé dans le Coran à propos de Dhu l-Qarnayn : Dieu « lui donna un *sabab* à toute chose ». Une des traductions possibles de *sabab* est « accès », compris soit dans un sens concret (une voie vers toute chose, pour accéder à toutes les parties du monde), soit dans un sens plus spirituel : un « accès à la connaissance », une forme de révélation qui pour Saab prend la forme de visions. Khidr de son côté reçoit une « inspiration » (*wahy*) qui lui permet de communiquer à Saab la « connaissance » (*ᶜilm*), autrement dit le sens des visions. De cette façon, précise le texte, Dhu l-Qarnayn était instruit d'une « connaissance double » (duel *ᶜilmayn*) : une connaissance reçue directement, et une connaissance transmise par Khidr.

La relation entre ces deux accès à la connaissance de la volonté divine change à un moment crucial du récit (Lidzbarski 1893: 291-3). Saab et Moïse al-Khidr arrivent ensemble devant une haute falaise au sommet de laquelle jaillit la source d'immortalité ; seul Khidr peut y accéder, car dès que le « Bicornu » essaie de grimper, la roche tremble et l'empêche de monter. À sa descente après avoir bu à la source, Khidr explique à Saab que l'immortalité lui est refusée et lui conseille de faire demi-tour car ils ont atteint la limite du monde. Mais curieusement, et contrairement à l'attitude qui avait été la sienne jusque là, Saab Dhu l-Qarnayn n'obtempère pas, et campe sur place dans l'attente d'une révélation (un *sabab*). Les objurgations réitérées de Khidr restent sans effet.

Enfin Saab reçoit à nouveau des révélations (*asbâb*), mais cette fois sous la forme d'une voix qui descend du ciel pour l'exhorter à ne pas garder rancœur du refus de l'immortalité et à repartir vers l'Orient où l'attend une nouvelle mission : « Purifie tes désirs de tout ressentiment et de toute colère, et pars vers les régions où le soleil se lève. Elles sont au nombre de 365, et dans chacune d'elles vit un peuple qui ignore Dieu... C'est à toi qu'il revient de porter la parole divine à ces peuples. »

On assiste donc là à un changement de situation très clair : Saab a reçu une révélation explicite et n'a plus besoin de Khidr pour en comprendre le sens. Aussi, lorsque le roi revient vers Khidr et lui explique sa révélation : « J'ai vu des visions

authentiques et j'ai entendu des révélations véridiques qui m'ont dévoilé ce qui m'est ordonné et ce qui m'est interdit », le mot utilisé pour désigner les révélations « vues » reste *sabab*, mais c'est le terme *naba'*, formé sur une racine (*naba'a*) dont une dérivation donne le sens de prophétiser ou proclamer être prophète, qui désigne les révélations auditives. Khidr répond par une phrase qui cite en fait le verset du Coran annonçant la mission universelle de Dhu l-Qarnayn : « Dieu t'a conféré tout pouvoir sur cette terre et t'a donné un accès (*sabab*) vers toute chose » (XVIII, La caverne, v. 83). Il souligne ensuite que le roi a gagné un accès direct à la connaissance de la volonté divine : « Tout ce que tu sais, c'est Dieu qui veut bien te le faire savoir, aussi ne détourne pas ton cœur quand Il te dévoile une parcelle de ce qui t'est dissimulé ». Khidr dévoile néanmoins une dernière chose à Saab : sa mission finale, l'épreuve pour laquelle il a été choisi et doit repartir, c'est d'affronter les terribles peuples de Gog et Magog.

Il y a donc bien un double saut qualitatif : en même temps que Khidr acquiert l'immortalité, Saab acquiert la compréhension de la volonté divine et voit ainsi son propre statut modifié, rehaussé. Or ce moment est aussi celui où lui sont révélés le but véritable de sa conquête et sa portée eschatologique, représentés par l'affrontement avec Gog et Magog : c'est à ce moment-là, en quelque sorte, qu'il devient pleinement le Dhu l-Qarnayn du Coran, directement inspiré et guidé par Dieu. Autrement dit, le passage à la dimension eschatologique coïncide avec la double acquisition, concomitante, par le « Bicornu » et par Khidr, de leur pleine stature respectivement universelle et immortelle ; on peut même dire qu'il la rendait nécessaire. La portée eschatologique de la mission confiée à Dhu l-Qarnayn dans le Coran – bâtir le mur qui mettra le monde à l'abri de Gog et Magog jusqu'aux temps derniers –, implique en effet que le conquérant possède une forme spécifique de compréhension de la volonté divine, distincte de la prophétie *stricto sensu*. C'est le processus d'accession à cette connaissance que le texte d'Ibn Hishâm explicite dans l'épisode charnière de la source de vie, qui change la nature de la relation entre le « Bicornu » et Khidr : et de fait, dans la suite du texte, les deux personnages voient leurs chemins

se séparer un temps, ce qui montre bien que le conquérant n'a plus besoin du sage pour comprendre ce que Dieu attend de lui.

Ce texte montre donc bien que c'est la perspective eschatologique qui unit intimement Dhu l-Qarnayn et Khidr, par delà la différence de leurs statuts, et qui instaure un lien quasiment consubstantiel entre le don de l'immortalité pour l'un et le don de la conquête universelle pour l'autre. C'est dans la perspective des temps derniers que les deux personnages et leurs rôles respectifs trouvent sens, même c'est si de façon différente : Khidr parce que l'immortalité lui permet de vivre jusqu'au jour du Jugement où il protégera les croyants des tribulations ultimes ; le « Bicornu », qu'il soit Saab le Himyarite ou Alexandre, parce qu'il construit la barrière, et de façon générale pose toutes les balises qui, aux confins de la terre habitable, protègent l'humanité – et en particulier les croyants – de la menace des peuples impurs et sauvages dont l'irruption terrifiante marquera l'arrivée des temps derniers.

La construction d'une parenté de sang entre le « Bicornu » et Khidr dans certains textes ne fait que donc que transcrire une parenté, profondément ressentie, entre leurs missions et leurs privilèges respectifs, entre une maîtrise de l'espace par la conquête universelle et une maîtrise du temps par l'immortalité qui convergent toutes deux vers le jour du Jugement et trouvent sens ensemble dans cette dimension eschatologique. Le refus du don de l'immortalité au « Bicornu » ne reflète donc pas un jugement négatif envers Alexandre ou Saab ou tout autre personnage identifié à Dhu l-Qarnayn, mais la marque du caractère spécifique de sa mission en conjonction avec celle de Khidr, et de la singularité de son statut et de son autorité, avec leur grandeur et leurs limites propres, quelque part entre royauté et prophétie.

On est donc là bien loin d'une simple opposition ou juxtaposition entre le temporel et le spirituel. Aussi est-il intéressant de comparer ce binôme avec celui que forment, cette fois dans l'Occident latin, une autre figure de souveraineté à vocation universelle – l'empereur Constantin – associée à une autre figure de guide spirituel – le pape Sylvestre – dont le nom évocateur de forêts est, étrangement, tout aussi « verdoyant » que celui de Khidr. Selon la légende connue dès le Ve siècle, figurant

dans les *Acta Silvestri* et traduite en syriaque au VIe ou VIIe siècle, Constantin, atteint de la lèpre en raison de ses persécutions contre les Chrétiens, se voit conseiller par les prêtres païens de se baigner dans une piscine remplie du sang de trois mille enfants qui le guérirait. Touché néanmoins par les supplications des mères éplorées, il renonce à ce bain et voit alors en vision les apôtres Pierre et Paul qui l'invitent à se rendre auprès de Sylvestre. C'est en fait en s'immergeant dans la piscine du baptême que Constantin, converti, guérit et gagne à la fois la santé du corps et l'immortalité de l'âme. Comme Mario Casari (Casari 2003a, 2003b) l'a montré, il y a de nombreux parallèles entre cette légende de Constantin et Sylvestre et celle d'Alexandre et Khidr, toutes deux centrées sur une « source de vie » qui, dans la légende chrétienne, est évidemment l'eau baptismale. Mais les contextes et enjeux de ces récits sont évidemment très différents et les relations entre leurs protagonistes sont dissemblables. La légende de Constantin s'inscrit dans la défense de l'autonomie, voire de la supériorité du pouvoir spirituel de l'institution ecclésiale, face au pouvoir temporel de l'institution impériale ; la légende montre un Constantin qui se soumet à Sylvestre pour être délivré du mal physique et spirituel qui le ronge. Les deux ordres d'autorité sont complémentaires mais restent bien distincts, comme sur la mosaïque du Triclinium du Latran où le Christ remet l'insigne du pouvoir spirituel (les clés de Saint Pierre) à Sylvestre I et celui du pouvoir impérial (le *labarum*) à Constantin.

Inversement, dans le monde musulman, la double nature à la fois spirituelle et temporelle de l'autorité des khalifes, successeurs de Muhammad, autorise et appelle différentes formes d'association entre ces deux aspects, dont le binôme Dhu l-Qarnayn / Khidr est emblématique. Cela permet aussi de mieux comprendre pourquoi le recours à Alexandre comme modèle de souveraineté pour des princes musulmans ne se réduisit jamais à l'évocation de la seule puissance conquérante du héros, mais faisait appel à la conception d'un souverain inspiré, revêtu d'une dimension spirituelle, auquel on se réfère dans des situations comportant de fortes implications religieuses et eschatologiques.

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Chapter 11

Pax Mongolica / Pax Mongolorum

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Scholars have generally considered that the concept of *Pax Mongolica* or *Pax Mongolorum* was first mentioned in the credentials or official letter sent by the Ilkhan Öljei-tü to the French King Philippe The Fair in 1305. This suggestion was first put forward by the famous Polish Mongolist W. Kotwicz in the 1950s,[1] on the basis of the phrase 'nothing is better than being compatible' (*ünenkü jokilduqu [jokildaqu]-aca sayin yaγun aqu*) (see Appendix 1). Drawing comparisons between this letter and another by Ilkhan Arγun concerning military alliance, W. Kotwicz came to the conclusion that Mongolian attitudes in matters of external relations had changed in the early fourteenth century; that they had come to prefer peace. Since then many scholars[2] have produced books and articles supporting his view.

Recently, however, with the discovery of earlier documents, it has become apparent to scholars that these ideas had been present earlier in Mongolian official relations. Thus, an official letter written in Chinese sent by Qubilai Qan to the Japanese emperor in 1265, which can be held to belong to the sphere of external relations, contains the following sentence: 'It is proper to maintain amity and exchange visitors, starting from now' (*Edüge-ece ekilen qarilcan irejü ociju amur mende-ben*

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[1] Kotwicz 1953; Kotvič 1974 (translated and introduced by Academician Rinčen on the occasion of the centenary of Kotvič's birthday). See photos of the letter in *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005: 281.

[2] Lemercier-Quelquejay 1970; Kotwicz 1953; Rinčen 1974; Seidler 1959; Legg [1970] 1995; *Arvan bölög...*; Franke 1989; Barkmann 2003: 77-83.

erilcen... sayin-iyar eyetün nayiramtubasu jokis) (see Appendix 2).[3] This sentence is reminiscent of Ilkhan Öljei-tü's phrase, 'nothing is better than being compatible' (*ünenkü jokildaqu-aca sayin yaɣun aqu*).

The basic principle followed by the Mongols in both their internal and external policy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was this one: 'It is easy to establish a state from horseback, but it is difficult to settle the state from horseback' (*Morin deger-e-ece törü ulus-i bayiɣulqu amurqan, qarin morin-aca baɣuɣad törü ulus-i töbkinegülkü kecegü*).[4]

There are good reasons to say that they attached a fair importance to the maintenance of good political and religious relations in order to implement the above-mentioned concept, despite the fact that their policy was not always in the favor of rival monarchs. Historians of Mongolia and scholars from various countries and religions have come to this almost unanimous conclusion.

Another important aspect in Mongolian politics, which continued from Chinggis Khan to Toɣuɣan temür, the last emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, was the equal treatment of religions: all monks, either Buddhist (Toyid), Christian (Erküd), Daoist (Sensinüd), as well as Muslims (Dasimad), were exempt from any levies. Such was the Mongolian traditional policy: foreign scholars have termed it the "Religious Tolerance" of the Mongolian empire. This attitude played a significant part in consolidating the peaceful state of Mongolia – which it still maintains today.

This attitude is confirmed by the letter sent by Qubilai to the Japanese monarch. And it is seen even before then. *The Secret History of the Mongols* attributes to Ögödei Qan the following statement: 'We shall not cause suffering to the nation that our father Chinggis Qan established with so much toil. We shall make the people rejoice, causing to rest their feet upon the

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[3] See photo of the letter in Sugiyama Masaaki 1996. For translations of the letter in Mongolian, see: Sum'yaabaatar 2003: 53-67; Idšinnorov 2003; Šagdarsüren 2003: 249-52.

[4] This comes from a Chinese saying applied to conquest dynasties in China, from the Book of the Han (*Hanshu*).

ground, their hands upon the earth' (Rachewiltz 2004, 213) (*Cinggis qa'an ecige-yü'en joban bayiɣuluɣsan ulus-i bu joba'aya / Köl-inü kösere /Ɣar-anu ɣajar-a / Talbi'ulju jirqa'uluya*) (Rachewiltz 1972: 171).

These passages show that the principle of *Pax Mongolica* or *Pax Mongolorum* was a continuous policy of the Emperors of the Great Mongol Empire from the first, Chinggis, to the last one, Toɣuɣan Temür of the Yuan Dynasty. These facts confirm that the principle of *Pax Mongolica* addressed all countries that had relations with the Mongols at that time. Not only the Mongols but many other nationalities were equally involved in the empire established by Chinggis Qan.

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Appendix 1: Lettre de 1305 de l'Ilkhan Öljei-tü à Philippe le Bel.
Translation Into French From Mongolian By Antoine Mostaert And Francis W. Cleaves (1962: 56-7)

Parole de nous, le sultan Öljeitü
Au sultan d'Iridwarans (Roi de France)
Vous tous, sultans du peuple franc, comment vous échapperait-il que, depuis les temps anciens, vous liant d'amitié avec notre bon arrière-grand-père, [notre] bon grand-père, [notre] bon père et [notre] bon frère aîné, et, bien qu'étant loin, pensant que vous eussiez été près, vous [leur] communiquiez vos nouvelles, quelles qu'elles fussent, et vous vous envoyiez mutuellement vos ambassadeurs et vos cadeaux de bonne santé ? Maintenant que, dans la force du Ciel, nous nous sommes assis sur le grand trône, ne contrevenant pas aux ordres et ordonnances de [nos] prédécesseurs, nos bons ancêtres, [notre] bon père et [notre] bon frère aîné, ne nous départant point de la règle [que, lors de notre accession au trône, nous avons trouvée] tout établie, ni de ce qui a été convenu [par vous] avec les bons [princes] qui ont régné avant [nous], [au contraire] le considérant comme [chose sacrée à l'instar d']un serment, nous nous proposons de demeurer lié d'amitié [avec vous] encore plus qu'auparavant et de nous envoyer mutuellement nos ambassadeurs.

Nous, frères aînés et frères cadets, par suite de paroles calomnieuses de mauvaises gens du commun, nous avions laissé se perdre de part et d'autre les sentiments d'affection [que nous avions l'un pour l'autre]. À présent, gratifiés par le Ciel d'une inspiration, nous, Temür qaγan, Toγtoγ-a, Čabar, Duγ-a et autres, descendants de Činggis qaγan, alors que depuis quarante-cinq ans jusqu'à ces derniers temps nous récriminions les uns contre les autres, maintenant protégés par le Ciel, [nous] tous, frères aînés et frères cadets, nous sommes arrivés à un accord mutuel, et depuis le pays des Chinois, où le soleil se lève, jusqu'à la mer de Talu, [nos] états se joignant (= rétablissant les communications), nous avons fait relier entre elles nos stations de poste.

Nous nous sommes donné parole disant : 'Qui qu'ils soient qui, [voulant mettre le désaccord] entre nous (m. à m. : "qui dans l'intervalle de nous") pensent autrement, tous ensemble, contre (m. à m. : "sur") eux nous liguant, nous nous dresserons.'

Maintenant disant : 'Comment renoncerions-nous aux relations d'amitié que vous avez eues avec nos bons ancêtres, [notre] bon père et [notre] bon frère aîné ?' nous avons envoyé ces deux ambassadeurs Mamal[a]γ et Toman.

Nous avons été informé que vous aussi, *nombreux sultans des Francs, entre vous, vous vivez dans la concorde. Vraiment qu'y a-t-il de meilleur que la concorde ?*

Maintenant, quant à ceux qui ne s'accorderont pas, soit avec nous, soit avec vous, que le Ciel décide au sujet du fait que (= de la manière dont), dans la force du Ciel, tous ensemble contre (m. à m. 'sur') eux nous liguant, nous nous dresserons.

Notre lettre, nous [l']avons écrite l'an sept cent quatre, l'année du serpent (= 1305), le huit des *qaγučid* du premier mois de l'été, quand nous étions à Aliwan.

Appendix 2: Official Letter Written In Chinese Sent By Qubilai Qan To The Japanese Emperor In 1265
Transliteration Into Cyrillic Script By B. Sum'yaabaatar (2003)

...Möhös bi-beer suurinaa suusan ehin cagaas, dain samuuny höld on udaan šanalaž asan Guulin (Solongos) ulsyn engiin nomhon irgediin zovlon züdgüüriig nimgelež ceregee tataž, nutag oronyg n' egüülen ögč högšin zaluugüi bucaasand Guulin van, tüšmel, tüšeed talarhan Gürend ailčilasan bölgöö... Guulin uls minii dorno hörš Yapontoi nen oir. Yapon n' Uls neeseneesee yanagš Dundad Ulstai üye üye arilžaa naimaa hiideg baisan atalaa, namaig suurind suusanaas hoiš neg č udaa elč zarž irüülen eyeten nairamtaya hemeesengüi. Vant Uls (Yapon) haraahan učir medehgüi baigaa bololtoi tul, tushailan elčid Bičig övörlüülen ilgeež, minii sanaag saitar senheren uhatugai hemeev.

Ödgöögöös ehlen, harilcan irž očiž, amar mendee erlicen, sainaar eyeten nairamtvaas zohis...

Ži Yuany guravdugaar on, Naiman sar

Translation From Mongolian Into English By N. Doržgotov (Personal Communication)

... As soon as my humble body acceded to the throne, [I] withdrew our troops in order to alleviate the long years sufferings of innocent people of Korea on war footing and gave back their territory. Young and old subjects returned home. The duke, officer and officials were in their good graces and visited our power. The state of Guulin (Korea) kept her close relations with my eastern neighbour Japan. Japan opened her door and had occasionally trade with the state of midland. But since my assumption of the throne there was no envoy from her and no sign to reaffirm her amity. The Kingdom (Japan) probably did not analyse the situation at the moment. So I sent a special envoy who bosomed a letter which would explain my intention. It says that *from now on, it is proper to be in a good amity by exchanging greetings and visitors...*

Eight month, Third year of the Zhiyuan [period]

Chapter 12

The Headless State In Inner Asia: Reconsidering Kinship Society And The Discourse Of Tribalism[1]

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Dominant Representations of Power in Inner Asia

Inner Asia still appears to be populated with tribes. Representations of Afghanistan in the popular media, for example, frequently depict the society as deeply tribal (*Daily Telegraph* 2007), and during the 2005 'Tulip Revolution' in Kyrgyzstan one of the charges made by his opponents against President Askar Akayev was that of 'tribalism' (Gullette 2006: 22). In this paper I argue that evolutionist notions of tribal and kinship society have distorted dominant representations of the power structures of indigenous Inner Asian societies, and that this has helped obscure the continuities between the state and decentralised aristocratic power in the history of the region.

Although anthropologists were once considered the 'high priests' of the evolutionist theories of tribal and kinship society, in the post-colonial era the discipline appeared to have exorcised these particular terminological ghosts. Critiques by Godelier (1977), Fried (1975) and others led anthropologists to shun the term. Works such as Vail's *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (1989) have helped establish the view that 'tribalism' was a product of colonial classification and administration. A now common view, as Fried put it, is to see the

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[1] This paper contains extracts from the author's book *The Headless State: Aristocratic orders, kinship society, and misrepresentations of Inner Asia*, 2007, Columbia University Press.

tribe as a secondary sociopolitical phenomenon, brought about by the intercession of more complexly ordered societies, states in particular. I call this the 'secondary tribe' and I believe that all the tribes with which we have experience are this kind. The 'pristine tribe,' on the other hand, is a creation of myth and legend, pertaining either to the golden ages of the noble savage or romantic barbarian, or to the twisted map of hell that is a projection of our own war-riven world (Fried 1975: 114).

However, this critique has not seriously undermined the application of the model of tribal society to Inner Asia, or indeed much of the Middle East, where the institutions of 'the state' date back to the beginning of recorded history. Here, scholars continue to apply parts or all of the tribal society model, although the analytical emptiness of the term becomes clear whenever it is seriously considered.

So, for example, in his work *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia: communal commitment and political order in change*, Paul Geiss sets out to study the 'tribal people of Central Asia,' i.e. the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen (Geiss 2003: 29), and presents social structure in terms of 'kinship society' organised by descent.

> Genealogies played an important role in Central Asian tribal societies. They represented the backbone of the society, built a societal web... Tribesmen formed a body of agnatic kin and traced their origin from common ancestors. In this way descent group names were inherited through the male line. Mutual relations were established according to the closeness and distance of shared ancestors... Genealogies based on primogeniture could inform orders of seniority between groupings' (Geiss 2003: 46).[2]

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[2] Geiss has his own version of the Morgan-Engels model of evolution. Society starts with stage a) which he calls 'acephalous tribalism,' and then moves on to b) 'cephalous tribalism,' and so on to c) 'tribal confederacies,' d) 'agricultural states,' e) mercantile states, f) 'industrial state,' and finally g) the 'constitutional state.' He cites

Even the generally well-informed Thomas Barfield (1989: 8), for example, writes of the 'tribal structure' of Inner Asian empires. We are bound, then, to take such descriptions seriously, and examine the substantive content of the term – what is a tribal structure, and what is the evidence for its existence in Inner Asia?

Evolutionism, Kinship Society, and the Notion of the Tribe

The notion of the tribe (*tribu* in French) as a descent group stretches back to the Latin word *tribu*, which was used for the early political divisions of Rome, and later applied to the thirteen divisions of the early Israelites.[3] By the fifteenth century, it was being used in English in non-biblical contexts in a way that overlapped with later notions of lineage and clan, and was, for example, applied to Irish groups having the same surname (Murray et al. 1933: 339). However, the association between the notion of the tribe and kinship society was crystallized into a particular form in the nineteenth century evolutionist formulation of primitive society in which descent groups were assumed to be the elementary units into which humans organised themselves. Morgan, Maine, Marx, and McLennan all saw extended ties of kinship as forming the basis for pre-state society, later giving way to territory as the basis for social organisation in civilisations. This theory of change, by which egalitarian kinship society preceded impersonal class society, became the frame in

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Barfield in justifying the view that 'nomadic empires are more similar to tribal confederacies than states' (Geiss 2003: 11).

[3] *Tribu* appears in Middle English in the mid-thirteenth century and had itself replaced the Greek *phylon* in Biblical texts. The 'tribes of Israel' were thought of as descendants of a common ancestor, although neither *tribus*, *phylon*, nor the Hebrew terms they indicated (*matteh*, *shebet* or *shevet*) were necessarily groups essentially defined by descent. The *phylon* in classical Athens was an administrative division whose origins are a matter of speculation, and *tribus* itself was used to describe the constituents of the threefold division of the people of Rome into Latins, Sabines, and Etruscans, political categories which may or may not have been defined by descent (Fried 1975: 3-5).

which the anthropological conceptions of tribe and clan developed.

Maine, who grounded his work on primitive society in studies of classical Greek and particularly Roman sources, wrote 'The history of political ideas begins, in fact, with the assumption that kinship in blood is the sole possible ground of community in political functions' (1861: 106). This scholarship assumed a fundamental distinction between societies based on kinship (i.e. membership of clans – *gentes* in Latin) and those based on territory, a distinction Marx saw as between 'blood' and 'soil,' and this opposition was mapped onto the dichotomies of primitive / civilised and pre-state / state.

The most influential thinker in this regard, both for anthropology and Marxism, was Lewis Henry Morgan. Following Grote's 1846 theory of ancient Greek state formation, Morgan saw the tribe as the political union formed by clans in the pre-state period and described the confederated League of the Iroquois in these terms, providing an early model for anthropological accounts of 'primitive' societies (Morgan 1964 [1877]: 102-23). As Godelier (1977: 89-90) notes, 'The most surprising thing in the history of this concept [the tribe] is that it has varied little in basic meaning since Lewis H. Morgan 1964 [1877]. The innumerable discoveries in the field since have only aggravated and accentuated the imprecision and difficulties without leading to any radical critique, still less to its expulsion from the field of anthropology' (Godelier 1977: 89-90). Indeed, the concept of tribal society as an evolutionary stage preceding state-organised society continues to have wide currency (e.g. Earle 1994: 944-5).

In fact, there is nothing to suggest Morgan's scheme was correct, even for ancient Greece. Firstly, the 'clan' does not seem to predate the state at all, but probably appeared after it, and like the later Roman *gens* ('clan'), seems to be primarily an institution of the elite. Starr (1961: 134), for example, remarks 'The *genos* (clan) only became important when aristocrats began to play a central role in Greek political life. They actually had no

place in Attic law.'[4] Secondly, the *phyle* (tribe) does not seem to have been a kinship unit, but an administrative one, in which people were registered for the purposes of local civil and military government.[5]

But in the nineteenth century, Morgan's vision fitted well with both liberal and socialist philosophies which were concerned with such notions as the original natural liberty of man, or in the Marxist variant, the idea of property as the basis for exploitation in the light of the universal sharing claimed for 'primitive communist' society. The notion that without the state people organise themselves into descent-groups, and that these tend to be non-hierarchical, became deeply ingrained in the Western social sciences.

Durkheim, the 'father of sociology,' conceived of clan-based society as a stage in the evolution of more complex systems, and saw this as a special case of 'segmental organisation,' i.e. 'societies based on repetitive parts which joined together simply through a sense of mutual resemblance' (Kuper 2004: 81). Evans-Pritchard's model of the Nuer segmentary lineage system fitted so perfectly with this thinking that one is tempted to feel in retrospect that if such a society had not existed it would have had to have been invented. Despite numerous subsequent critiques of the ethnographic basis of Evans-Pritchard's representation of the Nuer (e.g. Gough 1971; Beidelman 1971; Kuper 2004), the segmentary kinship model

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[4] Similarly, Ehrenberg (1960: 13) notes 'It is doubtful whether in early times we should think of the clan (genos, patra); there is much to be said for regarding it as a product only of settled conditions.'
[5] Starr (1961: 125) notes that 'The demos (people) was organized in subdivisions, tribes and phratries above all, for military purposes, for the preservation of law and order.' There is not much data on what the *phylon* ('tribes') were like before they became administrative units of state, but the idea that they were self-formed units of common descent is implausible since they appear after the Doric migrations in which an incoming elite was superimposed on local populations, with whom they could not have shared descent. So Starr (1961: 135) notes 'If the tribes were institutions of the invaders, the natives must somehow have been absorbed; in historic times no one seems to have stood outside these units.'

remained enormously influential in work on tribal and pastoral societies. The general frame into which it fitted remained so strong that Ernest Gellner (1994) continued to see segmentary society as the major predecessor and rival to 'the state.' Well into the late twentieth century, the dominant approach in both Western and Soviet anthropology was to regard tribes as 'survivals' of earlier stages of political evolution, a view that continues to inform many state bureaucracies.[6]

Colonialism and the Tribe

The era of European colonialism powerfully exported the term 'tribe' as an administrative category and established it as a description of collective identity throughout much of the colonised world. The colonial authorities in Africa, for example, found it expedient to identify tribes and rulers to help maintain order, provide labour, extract surpluses and so on, and usually termed these rulers 'chiefs' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Ranger 1983; Chimhundu 1992).

The most powerful African rulers were regarded as royalty, such as the monarchs of Dahomey, Benin, Ashante and the Zulu, and as Cannadine (2002: 9) notes, the British Imperial ideology contained a variety of 'aristocratic internationalism' that recognised (and sometimes reinforced) aristocratic orders in its colonial dominions. But in general, local rulers were described using the less prestigious tribal vocabulary of 'chief' and 'paramount chief,' rather than lord, king, or some other 'civilised' noble title, and this became more widespread as time passed and colonial government became more secure (Ranger 1983: 239). For all the salience of the capitalist economy of colonialism, aristocracy still commanded great prestige in Europe and the use of titles had important political and diplomatic implications (Mair 1977: 134-9).

The colonial terminology was later rationalised by structural functionalist modelling of many African political systems as smaller in scale, less centralised, and territorially looser than 'the state.' But as the true grounds for the term had always been to distinguish civilised from barbaric societies, this

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[6] For the Soviet view, see Kozlov 1974: 77-8.

terminology did not correspond to descriptions of any European forms of leadership since the Dark Ages. Each one of the hundred or so petty rulers of seventh-century Ireland was termed a King, for example, despite the fact that each governed a few thousand persons at best. The hereditary ruler of the Bemba, however, governing some 140,000 aristocrats and commoners was termed a Paramount Chief (Richards 1940). Elizabeth Colson notes the double standards of this 'tribalizing' discourse:

> In terms of territory, population, wealth, bureaucratic development, social stratification, and the centralization of power, the Hausa state of Kano far surpassed many of the kingdoms of Medieval Europe. Yet most of those who referred to the Hausa as a tribe were not being facetious in the fashion of Weatherford when he wrote of the tribes of Washington... Too many social scientists, as well as the general public, use [tribe] to maintain a false distinction between us and them, those people who used to be called primitive because they did not originate within the European tradition. Tribe, then, signals something about political domination but says nothing about the social complexity or political organization, now or formerly, of those to whom it is applied who may or may not have formed a polity in the past or present. In the 17th century when English-speaking explorers and settlers dealt with Native Americans as politically independent societies, they commonly referred to them as nations, placing them thus on a par with European nations... As it became possible to ignore and inexpedient to recognise the full sovereignty of Native American rivals with whom the English settlements competed for land and political dominion, 'nation' gave way to 'tribe' which carried implications of lesser political status. Tribe thereafter became the term commonly used to distinguish among the populations being incorporated into colonial empires as these were created during the 19th century. (Colson 1986: 5-6).

The notion of tribal society crystallised into a particular model by which the units generated by kinship form nested series of descent groups. 'The tribe presents itself as a pyramid of social groups, technically speaking as a "segmentary hierarchy"... The smallest units, such as households, are

segments of more inclusive units such as lineages, the lineages in turn segments of larger groups, and so on' (Sahlins 1968: 15). The term 'tribe' had come to stand for a particular anthropological concept of segmentary kinship society, as organised into a series of exogamous lineages thought to be the building blocks of societies without the state.

Problems with the Model

The model of tribal society as a segmentary structure of unilineal descent groups (clans) became increasingly implausible. As early as 1961, Leach had suggested that the supposed structure of unilineal descent groups might be a 'total fiction' (Leach 1961: 302).[7] The ethnographic evidence for the segmentary kinship model had always been rather slight, and what there was faded away in the light of more critical later studies (Gough 1971; Verdon 1983; Southall 1988; McKinnon 2000). As Kuper (1988: 190-209) pointed out, the actual local categories used to designate groups of people did not resemble those of descent theory at all (Jackson 1989: 10-11; Gottlieb 1992: 46-71). There is no Nuer word for 'clan' (Evans-Pritchard 1933-1935: 28), no Tallensi word for 'lineage' or for the segments of a maximal lineage (Fortes 1949: 9-10), no Lugbara term for 'lineage,' 'segment' or 'section' (Middleton 1965: 36), and so on. As the dangers of fore-grounding the analyst's categories at the expense of the indigenous ones became more apparent, these descriptions simply lost their plausibility.

As Kuper (2004: 93) writes, 'in the end even the Nuer, Tiv, and Talis cannot be said to have "true segmentary lineages".' He concludes that,

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[7] The publication in 1969 of *Elementary Structures of Kinship* by Lévi-Strauss helped shift anthropological interest away from descent theory and towards processes of alliance and exchange, and the failure to find classic unilineal descent in other parts of Africa and the world further undermined the theory (see Kuper 2004). Another factor was the major shift in African anthropology led by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute and the Manchester School under Max Gluckman. This led to a greater emphasis on historical studies, the analysis of social change, urban ethnographies, treating ethnicity as situational, introducing agency as an analytic category, and focusing more on economic relations.

the lineage model, its predecessors and its analogs, have no value for anthropological analysis... First, the model does not represent folk models which actors anywhere have of their own societies. Secondly, there do not appear to be any societies in which vital political or economic activities are organized by a repetitive series of descent groups.[8]

Indeed, as Goody (2000: 18) notes, it is doubtful if even the classical Roman agnatic descent group, the *gens*, was ever the dominant organisational form that Morgan supposed. It was certainly not the pre-state social building block that the nineteenth-century social theory assumed. Cornell (1995: 85), for example, notes that the *gens* spread with the process of urbanisation and administration. 'This feature of the evidence runs counter to the well-entrenched nineteenth-century theory that the *gens* originated as a "pre-political" organisation, which was weakened and ultimately eclipsed by the rise of the state. In fact the evidence implies the contrary.' Rather than predating the state, then, the Roman descent group appears to have been produced by it.

Without its grounding in a distinctive form of kinship organisation, the characteristics that are supposed to distinguish the tribe are reduced to the idea that societies termed tribal, ruled by chiefs, represent a 'pre-state' stage in political evolution.[9] But

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[8] Nonetheless, in Africa the classic model lingered longer than it did elsewhere. One development, similar to Kirchhoff's conical clan, was Aidan Southall's concept of the 'segmentary state' composed of a hierarchical pyramid of chiefdoms. This appears in his *Alur Society* [in Uganda] (1953), before Kirchoff's conical clan. This was applied e.g. by Aylward Shorter in his *Chiefship in Western Tanzania: A Political History of the Kimbu* (1972). Another development and later survival was the 'lineage-based mode of production' models proposed by various French Marxist anthropologists such as Meillassoux and Terray.

[9] There is not space here to properly review the anthropological discussion surrounding the definition of the state, but it is worth noting that on close inspection most of the rationales advanced by the structural functionalists for the distinction between state and non-state societies are, to say the least, highly debatable. Koppers (1954), for

this parallel terminology by which the hereditary elites of tribes are termed chiefs and those of states are termed nobles is also problematic. The Weberian definition of the state – a political community possessing a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory (Weber 1948: 78) – was actually devised to distinguish the 'modern' state. But it was used by the structural functionalist theoreticians to underpin the notion that the chiefdom was at least one evolutionary stage behind 'the state.' In retrospect, this approach seems limited historically and culturally, and poorly suited for application beyond Weber's original subject. Applied to the medieval world, for example, this definition of state would rule out almost every kingdom in Europe, as the Roman church retained independent judicial jurisdiction over significant parts of most countries until well into the sixteenth century.

Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940) used the term 'primitive state' for the evolutionary step after the chiefdom, a category into which they placed the majority of pre-colonial African polities. The working definition of this sort of state was a polity in which 'a ruler who is recognised as supreme makes his authority effective through territorial agents chosen by himself...[and t]he collection of tribute... is characteristic of all states' (Mair 1977: 124). This test of statehood is a hard one to pass for most early modern European states, in which the powerful aristocracies that controlled much of the territory can hardly be said to have been chosen by the ruler. That we recoil from the idea that England or France should be regarded as tribal chiefdoms until – say – the Elizabethan or Bourbon periods, reveals the residual ethnocentric evolutionism of the term. Europe had 'passed that stage,' it had entered 'historical time,' whereas polities in much of the rest of the world were examples of earlier stages, particularly in areas without systematic written histories to contradict the models projected onto them by the

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example, argued that the state was universal to all societies, and Lowie (1962 [1927]) had recognised this up to a point, but placed it in an evolutionary scheme of increasingly stable and permanent government. The compound definition of the state that emerged was rather vague and circular, depending a good deal on it not being tribal.

theorist. But in the colonised world only the most centralised and autocratic pre-colonial polities were considered primitive states. Everything else was, by default, tribal.

Service (1975: 82) provides a typical justification for keeping Europe out of the evolutionary scheme imposed on 'the rest.' 'European feudalism, then, was historically of a very complex, and perhaps unique sort. For this reason it cannot be considered a stage in evolution, or even a usual case of devolution.' It was clear, however, that superficially chiefdoms seemed very much like European aristocracies and monarchies. 'When [vassalage] systems become institutionalized as the power bureaucracies of hereditary chiefdoms, they resemble in certain important respects the hereditary aristocracies of late or postfeudal times in Europe. But none of these chiefdoms combine those features with the complicated land tenure systems and devolution in political unity of European feudalism closely enough to be classified with it' (Service 1975: 82-3). Without the mass of complicating historical detail available for Europe, then, more exotic societies could be cast as representing evolutionary stages. Although an earlier generation of scholars of Africa such as Rattray and Nadel had described pre-colonial African states in terms of feudalism, this terminology lost ground to the structural functionalist scheme, which presented itself as a more general and objective classification of political society (Service 1975: 137). Similarly, Vladimirtsov's 1934 study of Mongolian society (Vladimirtsov [1934] 1948) had described it as 'nomadic feudalism,' but this approach gave way before the advance of the tribal discourse of Radloff, Barthold, Fletcher, Khazanov, and Krader. The effect was to reproduce the old conceptual apartheid by which the colonised were subject to the primitivist language of tribe and chief, while the colonisers only used such terms for the most distant eras of their own historical narratives.

This thinking has had a profound impact on the scholarship of 'exotic' societies such as those of Inner Asia. The translation of historical texts is revealing in this regard. The observant Franciscan Friar John de Plano Carpini, for example, travelled to the court of Güyük Khan (Chinggis Khan's grandson) in 1246 and left the first detailed eyewitness account

by a European of the Mongol polity. He describes a hierarchical and aristocratic society:

> The dukes (*duces*) have like dominion over their men in all matters, for all Tartars [Mongols] are divided into groups under dukes... The dukes as well as the others are obliged to give mares to the Emperor as rent... and the men under the dukes are bound to do the same for their lords, for not a man of them is free. In short, whatever the emperor and the dukes desire, and however much they desire, they receive from their subjects' property' (*my translation*, D.S.; see also Dawson 1955: 28; Beazley 1903: 59).

Carpini used the Latin word '*dux*' for senior Mongol and European nobles alike, and early translators such as Hakluyt (1598) translated these as 'duke' (as I have done in the passage above).[10] However, nineteenth and twentieth century translators such as Rockhill (1900) and Dawson (1955) introduced an astonishing dual system whereby, when *dux* referred to a European noble such as the Russian nobleman named Vassilko, it was translated as 'duke,' but where it applied to a Mongol it was translated as 'chief,' thus confirming the tribal model of Mongolian society.[11]

Tribes of Inner Asia

It is, perhaps, unsurprising that scholars of Inner Asia have tended to reproduce the old models of tribal society. A familiar approach, represented by Barfield (1989: 8), is to incorporate into descriptions of 'typical' Inner Asian political forms the notion of 'confederation' derived from Morgan's theory:

> Inner Asian nomadic states were organised as 'Imperial confederacies,'... They consisted of an administrative

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[10] See Beazley 1903: 121, 59

[11] Carpini writes of a Dux by the name of Correnza (Beazley, 1903: 94), for example, but Rockhill (1900: 6) in his translation calls him a 'chief,' while Carpini's Dux Wasilco (Beazley 1903: 92) is translated (along with all the other European nobles) as a Duke (Rockhill 1900: 3).

hierarchy with at least three levels: the imperial leader and his court, imperial governors appointed to oversee the component tribes within the empire, and indigenous tribal leaders. At the local level the tribal structure remained intact, under the rule of chieftains whose power was derived from their own people's support, not imperial appointment (Barfield 1989: 8).

Similarly, Soucek (2000: 298) describes Mongolia up to the advent of communist control in the 1920s and 1930s as 'a confederation of tribal groups governed by a two-pronged aristocracy of lay tribal and Buddhist church leaders...' This is rather like describing the Habsburgs as 'tribal leaders,' since the Borjigin aristocracy of Mongolia were quite as well established and socially elevated as the nobilities of Europe. And, as Khazanov (1983: 152) has noted, the term 'confederation' is entirely inappropriate for the description of Inner Asian political formations, since most of these appear to have been formed by conquest.

But dominated by the notion of the pastoral nomadic society as an ideal-type, the tendency has been to graft received wisdom regarding segmentary tribes onto what historical evidence there was, so as to fill the gaps left in the historical record. The result was a timeless, essentialised model of steppe nomadic society:

> Throughout Inner Asia historically known pastoralists shared similar principles of organisation alien to sedentary societies.... Patrilineal relatives shared common pasture and camped together when possible. ... Tribal political and social organisation was based on a model of nested kinship groups, the conical clan... an extensive patrilineal kinship organisation in which members of a common descent group were ranked and segmented along genealogical lines... Political leadership was restricted to members of senior clans in many groups, but from the lowest to the highest, all members of the tribe claimed common descent... (Barfield 1989: 24-6)

However, since ethnographic accounts confirming this model were almost entirely absent, the lack of evidence had to be

explained away in the following way: 'When nomads lost their autonomy to sedentary governments, the political importance of this extensive genealogical system disappeared and kinship links remain important only at the local level' (Barfield 1989: 26). In any historical description, the argument went, one would only expect to find elements, remnants of the complete kinship system of the past.

In the Mongol case, however, it is clear that the *lack* of a segmentary lineage structure dates back to at least as far back as the fourteenth century. Szynkiewicz (1977: 31), for example, notes that 'towards the end of the Yuan dynasty... the lineage organisation, composed of a network of maximal lineages going 1... to the forefather of the clan and subdivided into segments, can be assumed to have ceased to exist. The few surviving maximal lineages may have comprised the aristocracy.'

So the essentialised tribal society is envisaged as existing before the Chinggisid state, at a period for which we have almost no historical material. Nevertheless, Barfield (1989: 189) writes: 'At the time of Temüjin's [Chinggis Khan's] birth the steppe was in anarchy. Segmentary opposition was the basic form of political organisation.'

Did Medieval Mongols Have a 'Kinship Society'?

At the time of Chinggis Khan's birth, the steppes of what is now Mongolia were divided between a number of political entities (such as the Kereid, Merkid, Tatar, Jürkin and Tayici'ud). In the dominant interpretation of the *Mongɣol-un ni'uca tobciyan* (*The Secret History of the Mongols*), these are described as tribes or clans. In fact we know very little about the internal organisation of these entities. What is clear, however, is that these polities were aristocracies with common subjects, and that the distinction between commoner and nobility long predated Chinggis Khan's rise to power. [12] The term for groups defined largely (but

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[12] These were clearly separated. There is recorded the lament and wretched confession of a commoner who cohabited with a captured noblewoman and was filled with guilt at his own presumption: 'I, Chilger, ... touched the Lady, the qatun, ... Ignoble and bad Chilger, his own black (i.e. common) head will receive (a blow)' (Onon 1990: 40).

probably not exclusively) through descent was *yasu* ('bone'); nobles were referred to as of *cayan yasu* – 'white bone' – this colour contrasting with black – *qara* – used for commoners.

There is plenty of evidence, if one chooses to look for it, that these ruling houses or lineages were *not* related by descent to the people they ruled. The people known as the Jürkin, for instance, were one of several named groups living in Mongolia at the time. They have been described as a tribe (Cleaves 1982: 245) or a clan (Rachewiltz 2004: 289), and from this it would appear they formed a homogeneous kin-based unit composed of clansmen. In fact, it is clear from section 139 of *The Secret History of the Mongols* that this political unit had originally been formed by an emperor (Qabul Qayan) and that the term 'Jürkin' more properly referred to the ruling lineage/house only: 'Chinggis Qahan made such arrogant people submit (to him) and he destroyed the Jürkin *oboy*. Chinggis Qahan made their people, and the subjects (they ruled), his own subjects' (Onon 1990: 56; Cleaves 1982: 66-7). The conquests of other polities, such as the Tatar and Tayici'ud, for example, are described in very similar terms, with the name of the polity attached most specifically to the nobility who were clearly distinguished from their subjects.[13]

There is no single term that corresponds to use of the word 'tribe' in translations of *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Instead a series of different words – *irgen* (people, subjects), *ulus* (polity, realm, patrimony, apanage), *ayimay* [*aimag*] (division, section, group, province), and *qari(n)* (foreign, subject) – have been translated as 'tribe' in places in the text when the unit concerned is believed to be tribal. Similarly, there are two terms, *oboy* [*oboq, ovog*] (family, lineage, line) and *yasu* (bone, descent, lineage), commonly translated as 'clan' depending on

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[13] See the Secret History: 'Then Chinggis Qaghan plundered the Tayichiut. The people of Tayichiut bones (lineages/houses) – Auchu-baatur, Qoton-orcheng, Quduudar and others of the Tayichiut, from their seed to their seed – he killed... The people of their *ulus* (nation/people) he brought (with him)' (Onon 1990: 63; Cleaves 1982: 76). Clearly, the people of the Tayichi'ud *ulus* were not members of the Tayici'ud bones.

the context; often the term has simply been inserted next to any group noun that the translator believes to be a clan.[14]

The term most commonly translated as clan, *oboy*, appears most frequently in sections 9-49, which describe nobles founding various *oboy*. These had usually acquired names derived from the founder's own personal names or characteristics, and some had very recently been brought into being. The key point to be made here is that constitution of *oboy* appears to have been more political than genealogical. Most of the ancestors and their descendants do *not* give rise to named clans or lineages; recognition of descent from a common ancestor alone did not generate a socio-political grouping in the way that the classic segmentary lineage model would suggest. At least one *oboy*, that of the Jürkin, was created by a king as an apanage for his son. This had happened in the relatively recent past. The founder of the Jürkin *oboy* was Chinggis Khan's great-uncle, Ökin Barqay, and his descendants alone cannot have been very numerous before the *oboy* was destroyed and its subjects added to Chinggis Khan's own. However, the Jürkin, and the subjects they ruled, were clearly a force to be reckoned with at the time of Chinggis Khan's struggle for power. And it seems that recruitment may have been at least partially by choice; we know of least one noble member of the *oboy* who was not a descendant of Ökin Barqay.[15]

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[14] Rachewiltz 2004: 3 (§15) provides a typical example in a passage describing a meeting of two men on the steppe: 'Dobun Mergen asked him "To which clan do you belong?" The man said "I am a man of the Ma'aliq Baya'ut, and I am in desperate straits."' However, in the reconstructed Mongol text the question actually reads 'ya'un gü'ün chi kä'än?' (Pelliot's transliteration), and the answer 'bï Malig Baya'udäi' (Pelliot 1949: 6). Cleaves translated this as 'What [manner of] person art thou?' (Cleaves 1982: 3), but literally this means 'of what you (addressed as familiar/junior) where?'; this could as well mean 'what work-unit are you a member of' as anything else. The reply is 'I with/of Malig Baya'ut.' No actual kin term is used at all.

[15] The great wrestler, Büri Bökü, was a nephew of Ökin Barqay, not his son or grandson. He is written of as a member of the Jürkin in §131, and later (§140) we are told that he had decided to join them (see Cleaves 1982: 61, 68).

Some scholars, particularly those working with the original texts and aware of difficulties with the clan model, reconciled the historical evidence with Marxist theory by assuming that – once again – the kinship system was in breakdown by the time of historical records. Zhou Qingshu (2001: 1), for example, a Chinese historian of the Yuan, notes than in pre-thirteenth century Mongolian society descent groups (*xing shi* 姓氏) included many who were not related by blood. Rincin, the Inner Mongolian historian, wrote that sometime before the twelfth century '*oboγ* institutions also lost their blood descent (*cisun udum*) character, and gradually became a unit of local relationships (*γajar nutuγ-un qaricaγan-u nigece*)' (Rincin 2001 [1977]: 57-8).

Ratchnevsky has a similar tendency. Knowing that *The Secret History of the Mongols* describes a clearly stratified society, he pushes the mythic nomadic kin-based era back to the turmoil before Chinggis is born. By the time of Chinggis, he writes, 'the kinship group lost its homogeneous character' (1991: 12). As with accounts of other Inner Asian societies where there are historical records, we have to conclude that the fully elaborated kinship structure has 'broken down' because we never quite find it.

The more one examines these early *oboγ*, the less they seem to resemble exogamous, patrilineal clans. The Borjigid, for example, are clearly counted as an *oboγ*, but were not exogamous in the early period; they married partners from other named descent groups within the Borjigin category, such as the Barulas, Ba'arin and Mangγud (Atwood 2004: 45). Eyewitness reports contradict the notion of large exogamous patrilineages at that time. John de Plano Carpini, the Franciscan who left the first detailed European account of the Mongol court in 1246, reports that Mongols 'are joined in matrimony to all in general, even to their near kinsfolk except their mother, daughter and sister by the mother's side.' He also notes that Mongols 'may marry their half-sisters...' William of Rubruck, who visited the court of Möngke Qaγan in 1254, noted that with respect to exogamy, Mongols only 'keep the first and second degrees of consanguinity' – i.e. marriage was forbidden between those related by common grandparents (Beazley 1903: 111, 197).

Evidence of large patrilineages does not appear in Mongolian textual sources either. One of the earliest Mongolian language dictionaries, the *Dictionary of Twenty-One Volumes* (*Qorin nigetü tayilburi toli*), was compiled in the early eighteenth century. The dictionary does not give a picture of distinctive descent groups that might count as 'social building blocks.' The definitions of terms such as *oboy, uruy* and *törül* ('kindred,' sort) tend to be overlapping and vague. It notes, for example that 'one *törül* is one *oboy*,' but defines *törül* by stating 'the *aqa de'ü* of an *oboy* are a *törül*' (*Qorin nigetü* 1979: 676). The literal meaning of *aqa de'ü* is 'elder and younger siblings,' but the phrase is used to mean both family and close friends in contemporary Mongolian, rather like 'kith and kin,' and there are passages in *The Secret History* that suggest it could have been used in such an inclusive way at that time too.[16] The dictionary adds that a *törül* can also be a *sürüg*, a term that generally means a herd of livestock, but when applied to humans can simply mean a crowd. The later dictionary *Qorin naimatu tayilburi toli* was compiled from many earlier ones. It notes that the '[people] who are originated from a grandfather are called a *törül*' [*Nige ebüge-ece ürejigsen-i inu törül kememüi*] (Namjilma 1988: 1614), and this suggests that the *törül* and therefore the *oboy* are small bilateral groups that we would call families (rather than lineages or clans) tracing descent back to common grandparents, as in William of Rubruck's account of the exogamous group in the thirteenth century.[17]

Taken together, all this makes the existence of large exogamous patrilineages unlikely and suggests a good deal of

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[16] Sorqan-sira, who helped Temüjin escape from the Tayici'ud, uses the phrase when warning him that they are approaching, although the Tayici'ud are only distantly related to Temüjin. See *The Secret History of the Mongols* §82, Cleaves 1982: 27.

[17] Something of this ambiguity appears to be reflected in the work of Mongolian historians such as Gongor (1991 [1970, 1978]: 7, 280). Although he largely reproduces the standard Marxist evolutionary succession from kinship society/organization (cyr. *urag töröliin baiguulal*) to feudalism, he often describes the *oboy* in terms of both cyr. *yas* (*yasu,* bone) and cyr. *cus* (*cisun,* blood), and this latter term could be taken to indicate matrilateral rather than patrilineal kinship.

flexibility in the membership of the groups described as *oboy*. Indeed, in a recent study of the appearance of the term *oboy* [*oboq*] in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Rykin (2004: 196-7) concludes that there are no grounds to conclude that it was a kinship group and that the primary evidence suggests that it was used to indicate both the rulers of a group of people and the group itself. This need not contradict the central importance of tracing descent for the noble families of that time. Deuchler (1992: 290) notes that in both Tang China and Koryŏ Korea aristocratic descent groups were 'loosely structured, but nevertheless placed great value on descent.'[18]

One need not reject anthropological kinship studies entirely to find an alternative to the lineage model of the descent group. In their 1995 work *About The House*, Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones revived a theme in the work of Lévi-Strauss, the notion of 'house societies' (*sociétés à maison*). Lévi-Strauss coined the term to describe the principle grouping of the Kwakiutl – which Boas had found fitted none of the classical kinship categories of *gens*, sept, clan or sib – and those of the Californian Yurok studied by Kroeber (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 163-70). He compared these to European noble houses, which:

> combined agnatic and uterine principles of succession, as well as sometimes adopting in heirs, often through marriage. Their wealth consisted of both tangible property and less tangible names, titles and prerogatives, and their continuity was based on both kinship and marriage alliance. Alliances could be both endogamous (to keep the house from loosing wealth) and exogamous (to accrue further property or status). The bringing together of 'antagonistic principles' – alliance, descent, endogamy, exogamy – was governed by political considerations and is a central feature of the house in these societies. (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 7).

This concept is particularly helpful in the light of Schneider's 1984 critique of classical kinship theory, in which he

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[18] She goes on to note that 'In both societies primogeniture was unknown, and no common ritual or economic actions are discernable' (Deuchler 1992: 291).

shows that in the Yap case the 'house' (*tabinau*) is a fundamental social institution of relatedness, one that he originally misrepresented as a patrilineage. It also sits well with Bourdieu's treatment of Kabyle society, in which the house is the fundamental institution in the constitution of the social order, and his rejection of structuralist and structural functionalist treatments of kinship on the grounds that practice should not be seen as the expression of abstract norms,[19] but the results of strategizing behaviour of households seeking to pass on symbolic capital.[20]

In retrospect, the account of the origins of the various *oboy* in *The Secret History of the Mongols* appears more like a description of the foundation of ruling houses or petty dynasties than of clans and tribes as we usually understand these terms.[21] The standard translation of terms, however, gives the impression that it describes a pre-state 'kinship society' of clans and tribes.

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[19] Bourdieu writes (1977: 52), for example, that 'far from obeying a norm which would designate an obligatory spouse from among the whole set of official kin, the arrangement of marriage depends directly on the state of the practical kinship relations...' He goes on to say 'the matrimonial game is similar to a card game, in which the outcome depends partly on the deal, the cards held..., and partly on the player's skill: that is to say, firstly on the material and symbolic capital possessed by the families concerned... and secondly on the competence which enables the strategists to make the best use of this capital' (1977: 58).

[20] For Bourdieu the term 'symbolic capital' stands for power, influence and respect within a social network, which he likens to the 'capital of authority' (1977: 40).

[21] Anthropologically, the clan is classically distinguished from the lineage in that clan members cannot trace precise descent from the founding ancestor, while members of a lineage can. It is possible that at this time common Mongol subjects did not have extended clans and that *oboy* identities were introduced later by the Qing as an administrative device (see Sneath 2000: 201-8). In the Kitan case, 'originally there existed no clan groups within the tribes... The Chinese exogamous clan-system was adopted under the Liao only for the ruling Yeh-lü clan and the Hsiao clan of the imperial consorts; as a consequence the Kitan commoners and tribesmen had no family names' (Franke 1990: 403-5).

The treatment of Kazakh 'traditional society' provides another example of this tendency. Geiss (2003: 29) describes them in terms of segmentary structures of agnatic descent groups that could have been read directly from the African political systems put forth by Evans-Pritchard and Fortes.

The Kazakh Khanate [22] dates from the mid-fifteenth century, when two princes named Janibeg and Qarai established an independent polity (Grousset 2002: 479). By the end of the sixteenth century, the khanate had conquered Tashkent, which became the seat of the Kazakh dynasty until 1723. Schuyler (1885: 30) notes that at the height of their power the Kazakh Khans commanded over a million men and mustered more than 300,000 troops. [23] However, in the eighteenth century Russian colonial power extended into the region and Abilay Khan, ruler of one of the three great political divisions ('hordes') of the Kazakh, swore fealty to the Tsar around 1730.

There is no doubt that this was another aristocracy, but ethno-historical accounts have nevertheless represented the society as composed of segmentary clans. Krader (1968: 101), for example, describes the polity as a 'clan-confederation,' even though it was recognised that the units termed 'clans' were not actually consanguineous at all. Wheeler (1964: 33), for example, tells us that '[t]he so-called clan system, which was originally based on the union of a number of families related to one another and sharing a communal economy, had begun to change by the seventeenth century...' Again, the fact that the historical accounts did not support the classical kinship society model was explained away by the notion that it had already begun to break down by the time that the records were written.

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[22] The terms Kazakh and Kyrgyz were used rather interchangeably in early accounts. Levchine writing in the 1830s, for example, describes the Kyrgyz-Kazakh Khanate. Later, the term Kirghiz was used to describe the subjects of the Khokand Khanate, while Kazakhs referred to those who had been subject to the 'Kyrgyz-Kazakh Khanate' before Tsarist control of the region.

[23] The celebrated Tauka Khan ruled ten or eleven towns or forts (*gorodki*) before his defeat by Galdan Khan in 1681 (Burton 1997: 337).

The notion that 'tribal' society must somehow form itself through bottom-up processes of aggregation continues to dominate historical interpretation. Thus, Soucek (2000:195) writes that '[b]y 1730 the Kazakhs... tribes had coalesced into three confederations, the aforementioned Greater, Middle and Lesser Hordes.'[24] In fact, as Khazanov (1983) and the historical record shows, quite the opposite process had been taking place: the fragmentation of a previously more centralised polity. The 1840 account of the Russian official Aleksei de Levchine makes it clear that the 'tribes' were actually administrative divisions or apanages created by a top-down process of political demarcation. These subdivisions 'took the names of their *chefs*'[25] (Levchine 1840: 301).

The Tsarist empire governed its colonial subjects using terms such as *rod* and *uprava* –'administrative clans.' In reality, these did not require any particular kinship relations between members and 'state officials transferred indigenous families from one clan to another by issuing resigning and reinstatement certificates' (Dobrova-Yadrinceva 1925: 30). However, Speransky's 1822 Statute enshrined the position of the

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[24] The Khanate was divided into three divisions known as Jüz, meaning 'hundred' (widely used as an administrative division in the Turkic tradition of statecraft) – the Greater, Middle and Lesser Jüz (Ulu Jüz, Orta Jüz, and Kishi Jüz).

[25] I have left the term *chef* in the French, since it has a wider application (as meaning a 'boss' of some kind) than the English term 'chief', which is primarily associated with tribal society. At the time *chef* – chief – was often used for non-European aristocrats. A contemporary of Levchine Victor Fontanier, a French consular official in Ottoman Turkey 1821-1833, for example, wrote of Trabzon 'chiefs have the title of aghas, and were formerly called derebey... This institution is precisely the feudal system of thirteenth-century Europe; the aghas reside in fortified mansions, sometimes equipped with cannons, where they preserve their families and treasures; they go about surrounded by servants and armed partisans, impose laws, raise taxes, and take refuge in their retreats, from where they defy the authority of the pasha, even the fermans [decrees] of the sultan' (Meeker 2002: 40). In his theory of elites Pareto used the term *chef* to mean leader.

indigenous elite using the paternalistic language of kinship. The Statute declares that a native *knyaz'* (prince) is 'the governor of a clan' and 'is accepted as an elder *as if* this clan is a single family' [emphasis added] (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003: 54). As Ssorin-Chaikov (2003: 54) argues, in the 'customary laws' enshrined in the 1822 Speransky Statute, 'a historically informed ethnographer could discern not an organic society but the legal code of a defeated empire' (ibid.). This is exactly what Levchine's description of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh suggests; the administrative code of the decapitated Kyrgyz-Kazakh state treated as the 'customary law' of a traditional tribal people by the colonial state.

Descent Groups as State Policy

Rather than one of the 'earliest acts of human intelligence,' as Morgan supposed,[26] the organisation of people into named descent groups was an act of state administration in much of Inner Asia. Comprehensive kinship organisation appears to have been a product of the state, not a precursor to it. In much of Mongolia there are no clans, lineages or extensive genealogies apart from the Borjigin aristocracy (the descendants of Chinggis Khan). However, in some areas, notably eastern Inner Mongolia, named descent groups are common, and this has been taken as surviving remnants of a once-general organisational form and evidence of the general applicability of the segmentary kinship model.

But a critical examination of the history of these institutions suggests a different story. In the seventeenth century, Mongolia became part of the Manchu empire, largely by diplomatic means. Many of the Inner Mongolian nobles were

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[26] Morgan (1964 [1877]: 10) wrote: 'The family relationships are as ancient as the *family*.... A system of consanguinity which is founded upon a community of blood, is but the formal expression and recognition of these relationships... A formal arrangement of the more immediate blood kindred into lines of descent, with the adoption of some method to distinguish one relative from another and to express the value of the relationship, would be one of the earliest acts of human intelligence.' Cited by Schneider 1975: 257-8.

relatively early supporters of Nurhaci (r. 1616-1626), the ruler who originally built the Manchu state, and his son Hung Taiji (r. 1626-1643), who in 1636 changed the regime's name to Qing. The Manchus attempted to impose a system of lineages upon their subjects, adopting convenient terms that could be made to stand as clan names. While this was not carried out in the larger and more distant Outer Mongolian region, Inner Mongolian groups such as the Dayur and Qorcin were incorporated into the Manchu state in the seventeenth century, organised into descent groups in a similar way to Manchu subjects.

Szynkiewicz (1977: 32) notes:

> Nurhaci (the founder of the Manchu state) based his organisation on kinship groups... Following established practice, the Manchus began with registering the kinship groups in the conquered areas. They succeeded in putting on record 233 groups of the *obug* [*oboy*] type in southern Mongolia (Lebedeva 1958), a very modest number in comparison with the potential number of lineages in the entire society.... Quite a few of them were presumably somewhat artificial constructs put on the list – as argued by Mergen Gegen.

A leading Mongolian ecclesiastical intellectual of the eighteenth century, Mergen Gegen was in an excellent position to have witnessed this process.[27]

In fact the Manchu descent group itself does not appear to have been a pre-existing descent group either, but was an administrative device used by the early Manchu state. The Qing organised its Manchu subjects into *mukun* – groups that became known as clans, but in the early period were probably not descent groups at all, and were 'constantly formed and reformed

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[27] For example, the Dayur Mongol descent groups (for which they used the Manchu name *hala*) seem to have been newly created at the time of their incorporation into the Manchu administration. When the Dayur moved from the Amur to the Nonni River in the 17th century, the groups that later became *hala* were named after rivers. Almost certainly, these were at that time territorial groupings, rather than pre-existing kinship groups. C. Humphrey, personal communication 1990.

by economic and environmental circumstances' (Crossley 1997: 29). But in the new Qing state administration, it became important to know which of these various administrative units people belonged to, and so these units became descent groups, resembling clans. As the Manchu nobility came to administer a huge empire, they needed to keep track of their subjects, who had particular military and administrative obligations and entitlements. Membership lists were kept and an enormous bureaucracy developed to keep track of genealogies, eligibilities and rewards.

The increasing emphasis on genealogy and descent groups in the Qing period also reflected Chinese Confucian traditions of administration, which sought to institute and regulate the patriline as a basis for orderly governance. The Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucian thought had developed in the Song (Sung) dynasty (960-1279) and came to dominate Chinese philosophy until the end of the Qing era. In this tradition, patrilineal descent groups were advocated as institutions that would structure society and guarantee the uninterrupted continuation of the political process (Deuchler 1992: 130). But this scheme was not a description of an existing 'kinship structure'; rather it was a plan for one, based on the study of classical texts. Such a system had never existed as such in Chinese antiquity and the Song Neo-Confucians failed to establish it in their own times.

After the collapse of Mongol rule in China, however, the Neo-Confucian Ming state initiated a drive to form descent groups and create genealogies among the elite, so that by the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries they had created what Dardess calls an *aristogenic order* – 'a corporate, kin-based upper class' (Dardess 1996: 137). Commoners did not at first form wealthy patrilineages in the same way as the elite, but in the sixteenth century administrative changes extended corporate lineage organisation to commoners, starting to create for the first time the social order that has often been thought of as 'traditional' (Faure 2007: 148).

This system was inherited by the Qing, who continued to apply Neo-Confucian policies designed to strengthen the role of the patriline. But this historical process is exactly the reverse of

the sequence proposed by the classical theory of social evolution, in which kinship society pre-existed the state and was gradually replaced by an administrative order. As Szonyi (2002: 57) put it, 'it was not the absence of the state but rather its presence that drove the construction of kinship organisation in the Ming and Qing.'[28]

The influence of Neo-Confucian notions of lineage organisation had an equally important impact on the Korean Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). As Deuchler (1992) shows, the aristocratic patrilineage was a striking feat of social engineering initiated by the Chosŏn state. And it was confined to the aristocracy; commoners neither formed lineages nor kept genealogies (Deuchler 1992: 12).

To find something resembling the classical model of 'grassroot' clan society, then, one must look further back historically, to before the Qing and Ming periods. However, yet again, first impressions can be misleading. One example would be the Kitan polity, one of the largest steppe powers preceding the Chinggisid Mongol state. Based in what is now Manchuria, the Kitan founded the Liao dynasty that ruled northern China in the tenth to twelfth centuries.

At first glance, the pastoral Kitan seem to conform to the conical clan model of Inner Asian tribes – a set of kin-groups united by common descent from ancestors. Historical sources refer to an ancestral pair whose eight sons became the founders of the eight original Kitan tribes. However, yet again, on closer inspection this turns out to be nothing like the clan-society model, but rather a description of aristocratic houses or lineages. Not only were nobles unrelated by descent to their subjects, but the commoners seem to have had no clans at all. Franke (1990: 403-5) writes: 'originally there existed no clan groups within the

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[28] On this point, Ebrey (1986: 40) quotes Watson in pointing out that 'it is difficult for many anthropologists, given their frog in the well view of Chinese society, to accept that lineage and related social forms... emerged as a consequence of an ideological transformation among the national elite.' But it is worth noting that the application of the lineage paradigm to China has been criticised by anthropological work such as that of Cohen (1990).

tribes... The Chinese exogamous clan-system was adopted under the Liao only for the ruling Yeh-lü clan and the Hsiao clan of the imperial consorts; as a consequence the Kitan commoners and tribesmen had no family names.' Indeed Wittfogel and Feng (1949: 206) remark in surprise at the generally 'clanless nature' of Kitan society in the early period, and note the 'instability in their organisation of kin' (ibid.). This pattern seems to predate the Kitan period. The preceding power in Manchuria was the Bohai state of the eight to the tenth centuries. Crossley (1997: 19) notes that the Bohai class system was rigid. Elites tended to be affiliated with large families and had surnames, but there is no evidence that commoners did.

Perhaps we must cast yet further back in history for evidence to support the classical notion of social evolution? The Xiongnu empire of the third to second century BCE is the earliest steppe power for which we have really detailed accounts, and is described by Sima Qian (145-90 BCE) in the *Shiji* 史記. The Xiongnu were ruled by an emperor and three families (the Huyan, Lan and Xubu) described as 'the aristocracy of the nation' (Watson 1993: 136). Apart from the aristocracy, what little evidence there is on Xiongnu kinship does not suggest a society based on 'clan identity.' It seems, in fact, that they did not even have clan or lineage names. According to Sima Qian '[t]hey have no family names or polite names but only personal names' (Watson 1993: 130). This does not sit well with the model of kinship society and Watson, when translating, decided that it must be an error and only included this comment in a note.

But still persists the idea that nomads like the Mongols must have been organised into clans. And this has been bolstered by the widespread use of the term 'tribe' to describe them. As seen in the early part of this chapter, the concept of the tribe has changed very little since the time of Morgan (Godelier 1977: 89-90). Twentieth-century anthropologists have characterized tribal society by adapting Morgan's model of clan structure (e.g. Sahlins 1968: 15), so that entities described as 'tribes' have seemed likely to be pre- or at least non-state in nature, and to have been organised into the sort of corporate descent groups thought to exist in other societies of this 'type.' Even now, for example, the current entry for 'tribe' in Wikipedia, the popular

online encyclopaedia, reads 'Many anthropologists use the term to refer to societies organized largely on the basis of kinship, especially corporate descent groups (see clan and lineage).'[29]

Part of the reason why the Mongols have been commonly described as 'tribal' is the conventional translation as 'tribe' of the Chinese term *buluo* 部落, frequently used to describe units within Inner Asian polities.[30] This term might, however, be better thought of as meaning an indigenous division of some sort, since no kinship relations are implied by either of the two elements that compose the Chinese term (Hucker 1985: 390). In the colonial period, however, the translation fitted well enough – both 'tribe' and *buluo* reflecting the notion of a political division of the uncivilised and was consistently applied to societies at the periphery of empire.[31]

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[29] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe as of 15/02/2008.

[30] In Chinese literature the tradition of representing those societies that are beyond the boundaries of the state as uncivilised stretches back to very early times. Since the Warring States Period (third to fifth centuries BCE), schemes were developed to describe the notional types of barbarians. Such literary traditions remained influential until Qing times and formed part of the discursive construction of the Chinese state as standing for a 'radiating civilization' as Di Cosmo (2002:94) puts it.

[31] This convention may, in part, reflect the influence of early European accounts of the Qing empire, such as the early eighteenth century Jesuit writings compiled by Du Halde. One such Jesuit (Pere Gerbillon) described the pre-Chinggisid steppe as 'divided into Multitudes of Hordes, called in their Language *Aymans*, every *Ayman* consisting of a Tribe or Family, in which were included the Slaves taken in their Wars one with another' (Du Halde 1741: 143). Here the term appears interchangeable with the word 'family' and indicates the nobility rather than the whole polity (termed '*ayman*' – presumably *ayimay*). In general, however, the Jesuit accounts use the term 'nation' and 'country' to describe Mongol political divisions, and 'House' (*Maison*) or 'Family' (*Famille*) to describe the ruling descent group, as in the following passage describing Qorcin nobility: 'The House of *Cortchin* only, at the time of our passing there, had eight or nine of these Princes, and these distinguished by their Several Titles, like our Dukes, Marquisses, Counts, etc... When they have neither Title nor military Command they are called *Tai gui*, ... nevertheless they are respected as

The Mongol term *ayimaɣ* [*aimag*] was conventionally translated into Chinese as *buluo*. In the Qing period, the *ayimaɣ* was the large administrative division into which the local principalities called *qosiɣu* [cyr. *hušuu*] (or 'banners' in English) were grouped and, in Qalqa, whose nobles met in assemblies named *ciɣulɣan* [cyr. *cuulgan*] (conventionally 'league' in English) to agree policy under Manchu supervision. In modern Mongolian *ayimaɣ* / *aimag* means a section or administrative division – such as the provinces of the state. But in historical documents, the word is commonly translated as tribe (e.g. Bawden 1997: 10), and in official Mongolian histories the term became the standard term to describe 'tribal' pre-Chinggisid political formations.[32] However, as Atwood (2004: 5) notes, as long ago as the thirteenth century the term *ayimaɣ* was used in Mongolian documents to refer to provinces of China and Tibet. It would be more consistent to assume that even at that time the term meant an administrative division. None of the theoretical baggage that was attached to the term 'tribe' is actually contained in the terms themselves, so their translations in early documents is a matter of convention based on particular models of steppe society at that time.

There has been a good deal of persistent unease with the use of the term 'tribe' by more critical scholars of Inner Asia. Lattimore sometimes placed the term in inverted commas to show the provisionality of its use, and remarks (1934: 76) 'a tribe is not so "real" a thing as the genealogy of a princely

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Masters by the inferior Tartars, who indeed are no better than Slaves to the respective Heads of their Houses' (Du Halde 1741: 116).

[32] Ceveendorj 2004: 376-80. Similarly Gongor (1991 [1970]: 46), faithful to Marxist theory, places the earliest occurrence of the term *ayimaɣ* in the period of the break-down of kinship society and the transition to class society, so as to conform to the concept of tribe/Rus. *plemya* as a group of people of common descent sharing a territory. However, in the feudal period, which he dates from the twelfth century, he describes the *ayimaɣ* as a lord's share (*qubi* / *huv'*) of a kingly polity (*qanlig ulus* / *hanlig uls*).

family...'[33] Similarly, when describing the Kitans, Wittfogel and Feng (1949: 428) are keen to note that 'the term "tribal" does not necessarily mean primitive,' and stress the administrative complexity of the political divisions described by the term. Like Lattimore, they are conscious of the link between a *bu* ('tribe') and the noble family to which it might be attached, remarking that 'a tribal name may derive from a noble – superimposed – leader, rather than from the inconspicuous and perhaps enslaved commoners' (ibid. 91).

Aristocracies and the 'Headless State'

One might, at this point, very well ask 'if the concepts of tribe and clan-organised society are invalid, what terms are we to replace them with?' To some extent we may answer this by making greater use of models other than those of unilineal descent group theory – such as that of house society. But a fuller response, in my view, requires a wider rethinking of our terms for political organisation. As Godelier (1977: 90) puts it: 'It is not enough, like Swartz or Turner, to ignore the concept of tribe by referring no longer to it; to appeal to prudence, like Steward; or to criticise its scandalous imprecision (Neiva), its theoretical sterility and fallacies (Fried), its ideological manipulation as a tool in the hands of colonial powers (Colson, Southall, Valakazi). The evil does not spring from an isolated concept ...' Godelier goes on to point out: '... "difficulties" in concepts of "tribe" and "tribal society" are not isolated or unique. They are found in other guises as soon as adjacent or like concepts are made clear: concepts of... "state society" ' (Godelier 1977: 95).

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[33] He was also very conscious that the English word stood for the Mongol administrative terms *ayimay* and *ciyulyan* – units of regional government that formed part of the Qing state. When describing the Manchurian Tungus-speaking group Orončon, for example, Lattimore (1934: 165) describes them as having become 'sufficiently "tribal" to be organised in the modern Mongol style on a tribal-territorial basis.' The 'modern administration' to which Lattimore refers was the system of local offices and *ciyulyan* 'league' princely assemblies that characterised Qing indirect rule of the Mongol territories. Because these were in translation conventionally described as 'tribal,' Lattimore found himself describing 'modern' governance in these terms.

The problems lie in the broader evolutionist scheme into which the notion of the tribe fits. The challenge is, in my view, to re-think the dichotomy between state and tribe.

The steppe polities that have been described as tribal have usually, perhaps uniformly, been ruled by a hereditary elite – an aristocracy. The discourse of tribe and clan, and the notions of kinship society and equality that have adhered to them have, I think, obscured the importance of aristocratic power in indigenous Inner Asian societies. Rethinking the old models suggests a serious re-examination of aristocracy as a political form.

The Xiongnu aristocracy governed their subjects using a military-civil administrative system of decimal units (Watson 1993: 136-7; Di Cosmo 2002: 177), and these characteristics – aristocracy and decimal administrative units – persistently appear in steppe societies until the twentieth century. Eyewitness accounts of the Mongol Chinggisid empire also describe a society more clearly shaped by aristocratic power than some sort of 'tribal structure,' and studies of Qing-era Mongolia can hardly avoid describing the society as feudal or at least as a clearly stratified and strongly aristocratic one (Lattimore 1976: 3).

Without the theory of an essentialised kin-based pastoral nomadic type, towards which steppe society was bound to gravitate, we have no reason to disbelieve the evidence of a long history of stratification, and its continuity between the eras of powerfully centralised imperial power such as the Chinggisid and Qing states. In the seventeenth century, for example, the authority of the Chinggisid imperial house had decayed. Ligdan Khan, the nominal inheritor of the Yuan throne, had his remaining power base in the southeast, and exercised only weak authority over much of the northern and central parts of Mongolia. When he died in 1634, no clear successor emerged. To the west, the growing power of the Oirat empire was drawing western parts of Mongolia into its orbit. Agreements made between the Oirat and remaining Chinggisid Mongol nobles (both described as 'tribal' by Soucek 2000: 167-70)[34] are

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[34] Soucek has thoroughly absorbed the tribe/chief terminology. Tümen-Jasaγtu, for example, is described as 'chief of the Chakhar tribes'

documented in the *Mongol-Oirat Regulations of 1640*, which make clear the mutual interests both aristocracies had in controlling their subjects and preventing commoners from defecting to the jurisdictions of other nobles.[35] It is clear from this and other documents that the basic power relations between nobility and their subjects predate Manchu administration, which only really became established in most of Mongolia in the eighteenth century. Nobles were free from taxes and corvée labour, enjoyed preferential treatment under the law, and had powers over their personal subjects that almost resembled forms of ownership – they often donated them to Buddhist clergy, for example (Bawden 1968: 106). Indeed, the Manchus had to prohibit the Mongol aristocracy's habit of selling and giving away their *qamjilɣa* (*hamžlaga* in Cyrillic) domestic servants and *albatu* (*albat* in Cyrillic) subjects (Bold 2001: 123). In many respects, the position of subjects seems comparable to that of the Chinggisid period.

Having abandoned the notion that the assumed characteristics of putative 'tribal' society would reassert themselves in the interregnum, there is no reason to suppose that these aristocratic orders were transformed between the Chinggisid and pre-Qing periods in which they resemble each other so closely. Power was largely distributed among the aristocracy and the extent to which they were integrated into larger imperial polities varied with the historical fortunes of the different imperial projects that emerged in this period: the Chinggisid, Tümet, Manchu and Oirat. The highly centralised

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(2000:168) – an extraordinary description for a Chinggisid prince who had inherited the rich apanage of the late Yuan empire.

[35] The code states, for example: 'Those (people) who go to another *qosiɣu* [administrative unit] and those who move between them shall be gathered and seized. If they have no *otoɣ* [pasture and commoners belonging to a noble] they shall belong to an *otoɣ*, if they have no *ayimaɣ* [administrative division] they shall belong to an *ayimaɣ*.' The regulations detail the punishments in the case of subjects leaving their allotted *nutuɣ* [pastoral area] (Altangerel 1998: 70). This is my translation of this passage. For alternative wordings in Russian and English, see Dylykov 1981: 53, 117; and Bold 2001: 117.

power of the early Chinggisid empire gave way in later centuries to more disunited formations with a broader distribution of power. These were comparable with their rivals and sometime allies, the Oirat polities of the seventeenth century. The much-remarked tendency for steppe polities to fragment as constituent parts were allocated to rulers' sons was real enough. But what has been commonly cast in terms of struggle between 'tribalism' and 'the state' would be much better seen as processes that produced more, or less, centralised and imperial versions of an existing aristocratic order.

This raises the question as to whether the centralization of power should be taken as a necessary criterion in the definition of the state. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940: 5) drew on the Weberian characterization of the modern state to argue that the state was an institution with the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory. In this conception, the state entailed centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions, and political forms that did not match this model were described as something else – usually 'tribal.' But this Weberian characterization of the modern state has increasingly being recognized as a poor place to start when approaching state forms more generally. Firstly, as Gledhill (1994: 17) has pointed out, pre-modern states were often not really territorial, in that their rule extended over subordinate rulers and nobles, some of who could be relatively independent or even ambivalent in their loyalty. The borders of such dynastic realms were often ambiguous. The sixteenth- to seventeenth-century domains of the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperors, for example, were scattered throughout central Europe, and could include regions of ambiguous allegiance. Until the 'modern' bureaucratic state began to develop in north-western Europe from the sixteenth century onwards, monarchies, in effect, ruled sets of aristocrats who in turn governed their local subjects and tended to exercise many of the powers of government for themselves, such as taxation and law enforcement.

In fact, Weber's work on the 'pre-modern' state places much less emphasis on uniform territorial control. In this case the key step was the institutionalization of relations of

dominance in the form of political office. For Weber the 'traditional state' emerged with the creation of patrimonial office, and in this early form power is personalized and limited by nothing but the whim of the ruler. He called this 'sultanism,' reflecting the influence of notions of oriental despotism prevalent at the time (Weber 1949: 346; Vitkin 1981: 447).

However, in the post-colonial era anthropological interest shifted away from the 'pre-modern' state and become more concerned with the modern nation-state. In this area, the Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches have remained influential. As Hansen and Stepputat (2001: 3) have put it, Gramsci's understanding of state power was something that 'emerged from the capacities, the will, and the resources of classes, or segments thereof.' This 'will to class power' led to projects of political and cultural hegemony that consolidated class domination. This has drawn attention to the distributed, non-centralized aspect of state power, and such approaches have found a degree of common ground with Foucauldian treatments of the state that emphasize the 'closely linked grid of disciplinary coercions whose purpose is in fact to assure the cohesion of this same social body' (Foucault 1986: 240). In this view, power was not seen as flowing down or out from a centralized state that organized the society about it. Rather, 'the modern state is not the source of power but the effect of a wider range of dispersed forms of disciplinary power' (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 3).

Such work prompts us to rethink the notion that state power is necessarily about centralization, since this is not very clearly true of even the most centralized and bureaucratic nation-states. Secondly, work of this sort draws our attention to the distributed power of diverse practices and institutions that generate subjects and to the political orders that define them. The key relationship of state is that which lies between office-holders and their subjects; of less importance are their relationships with territory.

We can regard the state as a form of social relation, rather than as the sort of distinct 'extra-social' structure that the state pictures itself to be. Chandhoke makes a useful point on this: 'Any definition of the state, therefore, needs to relate it to the wider society in which it is located; which it regulates; and

whose political organisation it is. The state is simply a social relation, in as much as it is the codified power of the social formation' (Chandhoke 1995: 49). But this leaves open exactly what the nature of the social relation is, and here it makes sense to return, selectively, to the Weberian and Marxist traditions.

Weber's notion that the state requires the existence of political office seems a plausible basis for the sort of social relation we have in mind, and the constitution of this office could serve as the codified power required by Chandhoke. We could add to this the Marxist intuition that the state presents itself as the just arbiter in disputes between other social interests. Finally, the existence of rulers and ruled as distinct social strata, be they conceived of in terms of Marxist notions of class or Weberian concepts of status groups, seems to be a persistent feature of descriptions of the state and accommodates the tradition of contrasting non-state society with state hierarchy. In short we might look for three features to identify the state as a social relation: political authorities, systems of rules or arbitration, and the distinction between governing and governed persons. In this sense we can see the state as present in the power that any noble exercised over his subjects (since this entailed rulers, subjects and regulations), and in the wider political order that framed and empowered this rule – aristocracy. The use of descent to generate rulers and subjects permitted all the further political refinements represented both in the 1640 code and the more centralized political orders that could be established by imperial rulers. The 'substrata of power' that underpinned each polity involved the construction of legal personhood in the form of rulers and subjects of various ranks, including slaves.

The framework of law described in *The Mongol-Oirat Regulations of 1640* text represents one of the few institutions of joint decentralised rule for which we have detailed documentary evidence. But the history of steppe societies provides many other examples of relatively 'headless' states. The twelfth-century Cuman or Qipchaq polity, for example, seems to have been another decentralised aristocracy for much of its history.[36] The

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[36] Horvath (1989: 45) notes the failure of one lord, Könchek Khan, to establish monarchy in the late twelfth century. The Pecheneg or Kangar

late twelfth-century Jewish traveller, Petahia of Ratisbon, who journeyed through Cumania, remarked that they 'have no king, only princes and noble families' (Golden 1990: 280).[37] Similarly the Turkic Oguz seem to have had no overlord but many lords (*arbâb*), as the tenth century Ibn Faḍlân reports, (Golden 2006: 28). Other polities had 'first-among-equal' overlords chosen from among the ruling nobles, such as the early Kitan state in which the Qayan was elected by the eight senior lords of the realm for a three-year period of office, until Yelü Abaoji made himself a lifelong monarch in 907 and introduced centralised imperial rule (Wittfogel and Feng 1949: 571).

The importance of decentralised aristocratic power is well evidenced by the continuing significance of the assembly of nobles as an institution of government, even in periods of political centralisation. The famous coronation and annual *quriltai* assemblies of the Chinggisid Imperial period, for example, emerged from the assembly of nobles that elected overlords such as Jamuqa in 1201, and Chinggis himself in 1206. Similarly, the *ciyulγan* assemblies of the Qing era, although thoroughly part of Manchu imperial rule, can be seen as a legacy

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polity of the eighth to tenth century also appears to have had very weak central authority, but was composed of eight principalities, each with five subdivisions, ruled by a hereditary aristocracy. However, the Byzantine source Constantine Porphyrogentius notes names and titles of Pecheneg lords that suggest court offices, an indication perhaps of another headless state form (Horvath 1989: 15). In the usual way, Horvath describes the ninth century political subdivisions of the Pechenegs as clans, while noting they were not actually kinship units at all – the clan system having somehow broken down before the documented period. He writes: 'These clans were no longer social units based on ties of kinship but the nuclei of territorial organization directed by a clan aristocracy. Power lay in the hands of noble clans which were separate from the common people...' (Horvath 1989: 14).

[37] Similarly, social organisation in post-Chinggisid 'Qipchaq' polities, such as the Nogai horde, are described by contemporary observers in terms of lordly or kingly domains. The 16th-century English traveller Anthony Jenkinson, for example, noted that 'every horde had a ruler whom they obeyed as their king,' and Al-Hasan the Arab also describes the 'kings and nobles' of the region (Haidar 2002: 55).

of the originally relatively independent nobility that swore fealty to the house of Nurhaci. Unity between Borjigin nobles as heirs to the Chinggisid imperial house proved fragile, despite common descent and such ritual institutions as their collective worship of Chinggis Khan at the Eight White tents (Elverskog 2006). But their power as aristocracy persisted.

Conclusion

The discourse of tribe and clan have tended to obscure the continuities between the state and decentralised aristocratic power in Inner Asia. The notion of a timeless, traditional, nomadic tribal society, organised by kinship, made the emergence of steppe states a puzzle to be explained away in terms of contact with the urban and agricultural states on their borders. The exotic image of the nomadic lifestyle, and the dominance of notions of kin-organised tribal society, meant that scholars were inclined to contrast steppe polities with states based on agriculture and city-building, and not explore their common features. Classical social theory sought a clear distinction between territorialised, stratified, state societies, and nomadic, egalitarian non-state societies.[38]

But steppe society was stratified for much, probably all, of its history, and the study of these aristocratic orders demonstrates the implausibility of the dichotomised distinction between state and non-state societies. In any real polity, power is evidently distributed among myriad sites, practices and persons. A series of features associated with 'the state' – the formal distinction between rulers and subjects, administrative control of commoners, taxation and corvée service, codified laws – all

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[38] Nineteenth-century evolutionist theories had a profound effect upon the history of Inner Asia and upon indigenous views of Mongolia's past. The work of Mongolian scholars such as Gongor reflected Marxist theory, with its five stages of historical development, and pre-Chinggisid Mongol society is generally thought to have been tribal, based on kinship. In official Mongolian histories, the term *ayimaɣ* (*aimag*) remains the standard term to describe pre-Chinggisid political formations (Ceveendorj 2004:376-80), and in this context the meaning of the term matches that of 'tribe' (e.g. Bawden 1997: 10).

these existed in steppe societies commonly described as 'tribal.' Given the aristocratic values apparent in the historical literature, the key distinction between noble and common status has as much reason to be thought of as interiorized as the governmentality posited for state subjects. We can see state and state-conditioned processes distributed throughout the life-worlds of those subject to all manner of political authorities. Power relations were inescapably present, certain configurations – such as household and aristocratic orders – may have been reproduced and acted as the substrata of power in a series of historical polities that have resembled the centralised, bureaucratised 'state' to a greater or lesser degree depending on historical contingency. The political relations of aristocrats determined the size, scale and degree of centralisation of political power, and these varied in historical time. This history shows no clear dichotomy between highly centralised, stratified 'state' society and egalitarian, kin-based 'tribal' society; but rather principles of descent deployed as technologies of power in a range of more or less centralised polities, ruling subjects engaged in various kinds of productive practices – pastoral, artisanal and even agricultural (Di Cosmo 2002).

The early Chinggisid and Qing empires, for example, had high levels of centralisation, while the Oirat Jungar and Ming-era Chinggisid polities were relatively decentralised. The broader picture that emerges is of power structures, more or less centralised, interacting in various modes of articulation, competition and superimposition as part of contingent, path-dependent historical processes. An examination of the substrata of power that underpin these processes reveals aristocratic orders that include many of the power technologies associated with states – such as enduring stratification, the administration of subjects, and forms of taxation. Their existence in eras of decentralised power such as the pre-Qing period, as well as at times of imperial centralisation, indicates that the local power relations that have made Inner Asian states possible could be reproduced with or without an overarching ruler or central 'head.' Although more and less centralised *polities* may be clearly recognised, the distinction between state-organised and stateless *societies* becomes meaningless here.

This political environment, in which almost all of the operations of state power exist at the local level virtually independent of central bureaucratic authority, I term the 'headless state.' Foucauldian treatments of governmentality have stressed the distributed, rhizomatic or capillary nature of power in liberal democracies, and I see no good reason to adopt completely different methods or terminologies when examining techniques of power in other political environments. Although there is no space to explore the evidence for this here, in the fuller version of this argument I suggest that the aristocratic orders of Inner Asia seem to have been based upon decentralised power and exhibited aspects of both the governmentality and sovereignty models (Sneath 2007). It is not that these aristocratic orders simply stand somewhere between the state and 'non-state' forms, but rather that in Inner Asia many of the forms of power thought to be characteristic of states actually existed independently of the degree of overarching political centralisation. The centralised 'state,' then, appears as one variant of aristocracy. Putting aside the distortions generated by the tribal model of self-organising kinship society, we can investigate the forms that power took in any given polity – be they centralised agrarian bureaucracies, decentralised pastoral aristocracies, or a political formation that includes both.

The combination of Qing-era emphasis upon the *oboy* as an administrative device and the notion of a traditional clan-based social organisation of the past fuelled the idea that Mongols were returning to their roots when in 2004 thousands of Mongolian citizens rushed to choose a 'clan' or surname – *obog ner*. Although reports in the western media represented this as Mongolians regaining precious traditions banned by the communist state,[39] the return of the 'clan' name was, in fact, the result of state policy rather than some sort of grassroots revival. The government had launched a campaign to use clan names and compile family trees in the 1990s to remedy the perceived

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[39] See, for example, Mark Magnier, Los Angeles Times, October 24 2004, 'Mongolians seek fitting surnames,' *Seattle Times*
http://archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=mongolia24&date=20041024

danger of accidental inbreeding. Guide books were published to help people choose an appropriate 'clan' name, since most families had never had one. The 2004 rush was the result of new state regulations stipulating that all citizens must have a registered surname to be issued with identity cards. Once again, it seems, rather than named descent groups representing an alternative to state organisation, they have been produced by the project of a government.

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Be aware that there is some variation between the chapters in transcription of names and terms. The editors have done their best to unify these, and to make reference to different transcriptions as clear as possible in this index.

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